THE PRIEST.

THE PRIEST:

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
"Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
"To their own vile advantages shall turn
"Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
"With superstitions and traditions taint."—*Milton*

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THE PRIEST.

CHAPTER I.

" Oh, good old man, how well in the
The constant service of the antique wo
When service sweat for duty, not for mee
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
When none will sweat, but for promotion,
And having that, do choak their service up,
Even with the having; it is not so with thee."

Shakspeare.

" You might add too, my wealth, [*annum*
Which *he* contemns; five hundred crowns *per*
(For which I've ventured hard, my conscience
knows it)
Not thought upon; ——— [flouted;
His chain, which my lord's peasants worship,
My solemn hums and ha's the servants quake at,
No rhetoric with *him*; every hour he hangs out
Some new flag of defiance to torment me."

Beaumont.

A FINE sun at the latter end of April had set: twilight was gradually deepening into the darker shade of night.

A large turf fire blazed on the hearth of that apartment appropriated by the controller of the Earl of Arding's household. The cry of the owl, and the rushing of the bat's wings, mingled with the saddened murmur of the night-blast—not detracting from the cheerfulness of that gay light which mirth loves best ; on the contrary, perhaps increasing it, by inducing upon the mind the contrast of the desolation without, to the comfort and security that dwelt within.

Master Benjamin Shirley, the proprietor—the undisputed sovereign of this little realm—sat directly in front of the fire. His left arm reposed on a table that bore an ample flagon of such wine as stewards love ; his right sometimes stroked his chin with infinite complacency—sometimes was passed within his doublet. Joy might have envied his fat round person, offering

ample testimony to the goodly provisions which the purveyor of the household provided for the plenishing of the retainers. His face, of the hue and circumference of the sun's disk in the last moment its whole orb is visible, lost the geometrical precision of its circle only by the triple folds of a chin perfectly ecclesiastical. An air of mingled gravity and shrewdness, expressed by a quick eye, glancing through a shaggy, overhanging brow, and a mouth contracted, in moments of important deliberation, considerably within its usual dimensions, superseded that fatuity which is generally the physiognomical characteristic of faces of this form. Moreover, a sly, comic, observant motion of the eye, rapidly glancing aslant, gave it an expression more energetic than good-humour, and, to the penetrating in the distinguishing shades of human character, more agreeable. An air of gravity,

was occasionally spread over the whole, like the last tint a painter throws over his piece, marking by it the hour his action eternizes, which always disappeared when he raised the cup to his lips, and quaffed off its sparkling contents.

His ruminations were disturbed by a knocking at the inferior postern, the loudness and repetition of which, indicated the impatience of the person requiring admission. The noise somewhat disturbed the even current of Master Shirley's humour, whose ears were annoyed by it in a very sensible manner, because it had been contrived that all sounds proceeding from that point of entrance and egress, should be distinctly audible in his apartment.

" Humph!"—thus he ruminated —" This is like the tumult usually made by that spawn of Satan, my Lady's page. I would, as I am a Christian, give my

silver chain and my gown of state to boot, to see the gates fairly close for the last time on that son of Belial. But, no; I hear one enter; and no hallooing—no shouting—no disturbance of the household follows. Philip Altham, I would receive this as a surer testimony of thy absence, than thy oath signed and sealed.—Who can the intruder be? By this time the household should have divided—part with Father Valerius, bowing to images of wood and stone, the work of men's hands,—part with Mr. Russell at the evening devotion. For myself, my frequent infirmities must hold me excused from either. Following the advice of holy Paul of Tarsus to Timothy the Bishop, I use a little wine for my stomach's sake."—He took a copious draught by way of parenthetical illustration.—"The porter speaks—there is a parleying. I will add to the weight of his speech, if

I find it convenient and in season, by the authority of my office and the dignity of my presence: or if, as may well be, he shall, on insufficient grounds, detain, in so unenviable a situation, him who hath arrived, *these* shall preponderate against him."

With intentions so equitable, Master Shirley opened the door, and was proceeding gravely to the scene of present interest; when his steps were arrested by the appearance of the porter ushering in a stranger.

The former was about to detail those particulars which he had delayed this person in order to acquire; but his explanation was checked in its commencement by an authoritative wave of the hand of the latter.

"I am William Lewen," he said, in a clear, distinct, and forcible voice, "and I come to fill the office of Secretary to my Lord, the noble Earl of

Arding. These are my credentials, and *this* token my particular recommendation to you, if you be, as I believe, Master Benjamin Shirley, the Seneschal of this ancient castellated fortress."

"Thou hast said well, Sir Stranger," replied Shirley, as he examined the token offered to him by Lewen. "Aye, I remember this silver brooch,—my gift to my nephew and god-son, Archibald Shirley, whilome my lady's page, who went abroad so young, and was bewildered into being made a Monk of. The Arding motto—'PROU DE PIS —PEU DE PAIRS—POINT DE PLUS.' There is no mistaking this. A Catholic can be grateful to a Lutheran for such a service as the saving of a life, it seems. If thou be trusty, Master Lewen, my Lord may value thee well, and recompense thy good deed, albeit it served a Papist; and, moreover, a Monk. Right welcome here! Our

halls can afford good cheer and hearty welcome, equally to traveller and in-dweller, to stranger and friend. Advance, sir, and peace and prosperity, and a long residence within these walls be thine."

The Stranger inclined his body, and drew near the fire with the seneschal, whilst the porter quitted the apartment.

Shirley poured the direct glance of his shrewd eye full on William Lewen, as he stood in the strong light, that illuminated the space around. The first bloom of youth was on his brow. His face was deeply pale; but whether that excessive paleness were its natural hue, or the effect of a melancholy disposition, or of unhappy circumstances, was not evident. His hair, dark, and waving, shaded his temples, but his ample forehead was entirely open, and deepened his sable curls by the contrast of marble whiteness. His eye was of that pe-

culiar hue which seems to deepen or lighten according to the degree of the intensity of the mind's emotions, the very colour of it appearing to arise from an intellectual source. The lashes long, black, and dropping over the eyes, contributed to the singular effect of the whole countenance. The form of the head was indisputably Roman—curved—bold—haughty—and decided. His stature was low, and his figure slight,—so slight, indeed, that it had almost an appearance of fragility; but his frame was compact,—every muscle seemed well knit and forcible—every limb admirably perfect. Above all, his hands struck the seneschal as being of a singular and striking beauty. There was that in his whole appearance, which, once seen, fixed him indelibly on the memory. It had in perfection that species of fascination which attracts without pleasing,—which impresses itself on

the very soul of the spectator, and which he never can, for one instant, lose sight of, or repel. It was a form on which the vulgar gaze with awe, but which they reverence and obey;—a form which more discerning eyes recognise as the shrine of a soul, daring, grand, and imperious; sublime in virtue, or abominable in vice.

The steward stood some moments in silent and decided contemplation of the newly arrived secretary. Even when that scrutiny had continued for a time that might have enabled him to swear to the identity of the individual after the lapse of any indefinite period, he preserved his silence. The consequence he derived from his long services in his Lord's family, from his silver chain, his keys, his absolute authority over the whole retinue of the house of Arding, his complacent and satisfactory belief in his own superior sagacity,

were insufficient to preserve his feelings of self-respect, or to animate him to that ease and familiarity with William Lewen, in which he was accustomed to indulge towards all others; and which was scarcely restrained in the presence of that powerful noble, for whose race he entertained a feudal devotion, which had descended in his family from father to son, until it had become an hereditary trait of character.

Shirley had lost his fluency with his ease, and he remained standing before William Lewen, the prey of that awkward, distressing feeling of *mauvaise honte*, the sufferer under which is unable to escape from its influence, at the same time that he is perfectly sensible of its existence.

Perhaps the Stranger was accustomed to excite this feeling; for he beheld its operation on Shirley without manifesting surprise, or any emotion. Advanc-

ing nearer to the fire, he drew a seat to it, and congratulated himself aloud on having arrived at so cheerful a haven, after a long and comfortless journey over a peculiarly uninteresting tract of country.

A remark like this was admirably calculated to restore Shirley's cheerfulness and importance. With magic-lantern-like effect, it threw on the wall before him, with exaggerated brilliancy, the different emblems of his consequence and dignity. Recovering his erect gesture, he advanced to the table, and filled two cups of that sparkling liquid with which he had previously enlivened his solitude. Presenting one to Lewen, he insisted on pledging him. The secretary quaffed the contents as if he thirsted like David, when he longed for the water of the well of Bethlehem, which convinced Shirley that he had a mere man to deal with,—one, more-

over, who was to occupy a domestic situation in the household of Arding. This reflection rapidly dispersed the few relics of his original embarrassment; and after having gained a clear view of the dregs of a second cup, he became as loquacious and communicative as the most inquisitive could desire.

William Lewen seemed one who had learnt to observe the "flats and sharps of discourse:" he seized the occasion of the steward's accounting for the bustle that suddenly arose in the castle, by remarking that the servants were returning from their devotional exercises, to allude to the divided religion which possessed the whole establishment, "not an unapt miniature," he added, "of the divisions which, at this juncture, run through the kingdom on that question."

"True," said Shirley, shaking his head with profound gravity; "but

God forbid, that they should distract and confound every noble house, as they have done this of Arding. 'Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech—that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!'".

"It is strange," said Lewen, with an air of deep musing, seeming rather to reflect aloud than to converse with the steward,—"it is strange that so rigid a Catholic as the lady of Arding, should have consented to become the wife of a man sunk to such deep perdition, as she must believe her lord to be."

"Aye,—but love—love—master secretary, as you may have heard or read, brings stranger things to pass than that,—yea, verily—is given to the working of greater miracles than even a Glastonbury relic. Moreover, when that glance first passed between my Lord and my Lady, which showed to the view of each so fair a person, and one withal whom gallant knight and stately

dame praised,—all priding themselves on obtaining one look from those eyes which were afterwards to come in such close conjunction;—at this time, I say, my Lord's religion was but suspected; and he, knowing the strict adherence of my Lady's family to the old creed, justly concluded that *her* principles were warped by *their* prejudices, and was not very anxious to disclose to her a secret, which could hardly work him good, and which would *surely* bring forth mischief. And Love, you know, though a mighty pretty boy, is rather weak in the eye, and sees no stumbling blocks that are less than Paul's."

"But their union was the more wonderful," said Lewen, with an appearance of great interest, "because, as your nephew Archibald informed me, there had been an hereditary feud in their families, since the Normans came in."

"Aye, aye—Archibald well know the history of our house; and the whole narrative of that deadly feud between Arding and Marleyland is to be found in our archives. But what hath a thought like this to do in the presence of beauty; or how could Beauty remember it when the flower of chivalry stood before her? Verily, love washeth away all blemishes as purely as Annis the Clear's water.—Many a letter I have carried to the Lady Joanna when twilight fell, and she stood by her own bower waiting for it!—A fine creature she was! And my Lord then might have matched the best in England. But times are altered now,—and God amend them both!"

Again the seneschal's lips kissed the brim of his cup. The secretary's eyes were fixed on the fire with an expression of deep musing, inveterately English.

"Love-tales, Master Lewen," continued Shirley, whom his last draught had somewhat exhilarated,—"love-tales are apt to set the spring-tide spirits of youth a dancing, and operate on them as kindly as the juice of the grape on the autumn of eld.—But what, Master Secretary? Thou art not of the sons of Rechab? Verily, I am inclined to think the wine that in vain tempted the children of Jonadab, was of a worse vintage than this, and had not so bright a sparkle."

Lewen understood the hint, and courteously pledging the seneschal, did honour to his hospitality.

"Aye," pursued the latter, feeling himself every moment more socially disposed, "be you on what ground you may with my Lord, or holy father Valerius, or pious Mr. Russell, I perceive that you will always have a firm friend in Benjamin Shirley. I love a

man to do honour to his recommendation, as you have done to my nephew Archibald's, Master Lewen."

Lewen smiled gravely. "To do my Lord's behest so far as honour and conscience will permit, I come," he replied:—"*more* will not be required—*more* cannot be conceded."

"That is honest," said Shirley; "and *more* my Lord will not ask of you. From a boy I knew him; ever honourable, impetuous, proud, noble, and generous! Whether he rode at the ring, or moved merrily in the galliard; whether with kings in their council-chambers, or with ladies in their bowers, always in his proper place, always best in each! He was a man, Master Secretary, whom love made to be the lord of his empire, and whom nought but love could have changed."

"He *is* then changed!" said the Se-

cretary, with an accent that equivocated between a demand and a melancholy assertion.

"You shall hear, Master Lewen.—Deep as was the hatred cherished between those of Arding and Marleyland, there arose no brawls with it. It was cold and silent as the grave. Catherine of Arragon—"

"Whose memory be blessed!" said Lewen fervently.

"Even so; for Catholic or Protestant, she was a right good lady."

"And a pious,"—added Lewen.

"And a pious," repeated Shirley, assentingly—"albeit, walking in the error of her ways, and choosing the darkness rather than the light."

There was a pause—of complacency, arising from his conviction of the dignity and sagacity of his remark on the part of Shirley,—of some impenetrable sentiment on that of Lewen.

"Catherine of Arragon," resumed Shirley, interrupting the silence, "was the friend of my Lady Countess of Marleyland, and had always promised high favour to my Lady Joanna when she should be brought to Court. And although Catherine's influence was sadly waning, at the proper age my Lady Joanna was taken to the presence; and as fate or love would have it, my young Lord just kissing the king's hand on his accession to his title, saw her, and—you may divine the rest."

"Aye, master Shirley, we may indeed read out the rest without Friar Bacon's assistance. They loved; and, as it hath ever been, destiny smiled not on that love."

"Even so. Their attachment began to be loudly whispered at court; for my Lord was seen always in my Lady's colours, and she sang his madrigals to her lute, and all saw and smiled that

neither danced so well as when the partner of the other. My Lady Joanna, therefore, was hurried down to the Abbey of Marleyland, and for many weary months was threatened, by turns, with a convent and a new lover. My Lord, too, went into the country; and I—though youth might have found him a meeter companion—was the attendant of his journey, and the confidant of his misfortunes."

It may be here observed of Shirley, that, in place of keeping, in his discourse, to one point, from which all his remarks should naturally flow, he seemed to have described a circle, from which he drew lines of infinite variety, making them, eventually, with exceeding difficulty, verge to the same centre.

"The lords of Arding, if I am correctly informed," said Lewen, "have generally wedded with noble blood and

wealthy dower. However gifted with the former Lady Joanna of Marleyland might be, she was not amply endowed; and, from that circumstance, I conceive her beauty must have been extraordinary."

"Queen Anne Boleyn feared that beauty," replied Shirley with great animation. "When at Court together, if it had not been that the King's favour shining on the Lady Anne, like the sun on a bright jewel, drew out all her brilliance, the courtiers would have passed by her to gaze on the Lady Joanna.—I may speak largely of it; for I saw her in her best and her saddest moods, and I saw her always fairer than May-morning. It was I who bore to her all the tokens of my Lord's great love for her. By her own woodbine bower she used to await my arrival in the clear moonlight, like an angel who had sailed down from Heaven on its

beams. I have looked at her eyes flashing fire on me as I produced the packet from my bosom, and then at the stars above us, and have thought *they* never burned half so brightly. I see them now shining in her pale face, whiter and more beautiful than a pear-blossom."—Shirley paused a moment to allow his auditor time to digest this *morçeau* of botanical learning.—"Yet with all my Lady Joanna's grief and her struggles, there was a pride that was not to be quelled. Their separation, the convent, her misfortunes since, have not subdued it. In that—almost in that alone—Lady Joanna of Marleyland and the Countess of Arding are the same."

"They *were* then separated," said Lewen, whose attention was now evidently enchained.

"Aye, Master Lewen, they *were* separated; and I—God help me!—was

the only comforter my Lord had in his distress. Much labour and continual watchfulness it cost me, to keep him from coming to deeds of open violence with the House of Marleyland. But —God be thanked!—I *did* keep him. *Then* he began to change; he lost his mirth and his wildness at once; for before, he was as merry a Lord as ever frolicked at a festival, or let fly a hawk."

"And, meanwhile, where was the Lady Joanna?"

"At a convent, under the particular care of the Abbess, who was her kinswoman. By threats or persuasions she was intimidated or cajoled into commencing her noviciate, the rumour of which event was, with great care, spread far and wide. Queen Anne Boleyn was, at that time, at the height of his highness the King's favour, and my Lord stood well with her. Almost

mad with anxiety and vexation, he posted to Court, and strove, by the Queen's entreaties, to obtain the King's influence to prevent the completion of the sacrifice. But Henry, with all his despotism, chose not to interfere in the domestic concerns of so powerful a House, and my Lord retired to his own castle to wear away the time as he might. A weary and a heavy year it was with us all! No hawking—no hunting—no masques—no revels! We kept Lent during the whole of it, and had no hour of relaxation but the performance of a grave Morality of the Devil and Saint Anthony, which, besides adding to the gloominess about us, savoured strongly of the abominations of Popery. Your cup has been full this last half-hour, Master Lewen; I will replenish mine, and will drink —'To the true Church!'"

"To the true Church!" echo-

ed the Secretary with solemnity, raising the cup to his lips, and quaffing it to the very dregs.

"In the meanwhile," resumed Shirley, "the hour rapidly drew on when the final deed of separation between my Lord and the Lady Joanna was to be done. He who had drooped before, now seemed dying. All the day he was silent and solitary, and he breathed the fresh air only with the owl and the nightingale. But at length a visitor, a near kinsman of my Lord's, came to the castle; and then bustle once again began, and the whole retinue yawned and looked about them as if just awakened from sleep to life. My Lord was in motion immediately; he had no time even for thought, surely not for communication with me, and I was left to wonder and to wonder, and to bless myself and my ignorance. But, lo! the truth was one day revealed.

Complaints of the enormities practised in that very convent, had reached the ears of Cromwell. A visitation was forthwith ordered, and for this purpose my Lord's kinsman was come."

"This could scarcely relieve your Lord without the commission of a daring impiety," said Lewen gravely.

Shirley opened wide his eyes, as if to ascertain, by the opposing evidence of two senses, whether one had not deceived him. Unable to attain his point by this means, he quaffed another draught of the sparkling liquor, which had, at least, the effect of inducing oblivion of the cause of his momentary annoyance.

"The hue and cry against monasteries," he continued, "was now louder than ever. The abominable practices that had been brought to light had inflamed against them all but the most bigotted Catholics. In several houses

factions were found to exist, each exercising barbarous cruelties against the other, accordingly as either prevailed. In all, idolatry and superstition were at their height. In many, instruments and tools for multiplying and coining were found. In some, those who were professed, threw themselves at the feet of the visitors, declaring that they had been compelled to take the vows, and thus obtained a dispensation. Their pretended miracles also had been exposed, and were railed against throughout the kingdom.* The story of the Bexley *Rood of Grace*, brought to St. Paul's Cross, and broken in the sight of the people, was talked of everywhere. Those miraculous motions of

* This exposure of Monkish fraud in fact took place in 1538, five years before the events which Shirley is recounting are supposed to have occurred.—*Transeat.*

the head, hands, and feet—the rolling of the eyes—the bending of the brows—were discovered to have been produced by springs, instead of the operation of a Divine power. In short—in the words of Mr. Russell, speaking of the downfall of the Babylonish Church of Rome—the Babel raised by St. Peter's pretended successors had at length touched the clouds, and began to overhang its base. It has at last crumbled into dust and ashes."

"Its head is, indeed, temporarily veiled, in these realms at least," returned Lewen, with the air of a man aware that he must make an acquiescence of some sort, and anxious, by an evasion, to avoid giving offence.

Again the Steward had recourse to his cup, which always had the effect of harmonizing.

"When we arrived before the gates of the convent," he continued, "it

was such a night as has not been in my memory. It was dark, as if light had never been ; the heavy plashing of the rain against the roofs and walls, the rattling of the windows, the blasts of the wind, striving, as it seemed, to tear up from the foundations the seat of so much wickedness —— "

" *Peace! Peace!*" The deep voice seemed to swim round the apartment in a prolonged cadence that thrilled through the soul of Shirley.

He looked around : none was present, save himself and the Secretary, whose eyes, shining beneath his bent brows, were fixed on the fire, whilst his face was gravely pale as at the first. The Seneschal opened his lips to demand of his companion whether *such* a sound had assailed his ears ; but the inviting goblet stood before him, and his mouth was again the passage of ingress in place of egress. Whether the liquid

possessed the virtues of Lethe is a query; that it immediately restored Shirley's composure is a fact, and he suffered the incident to pass over unheeded.

Animated by the delight of engrossing the whole attention of an auditor, who, he concluded, was listening to his narrative with equal amazement and interest, he resumed his loquacity:— "The King's warrant procured us instant admission," he continued. "So many fair creatures, pale with terror of one sort or other, I never saw assembled elsewhere. My Lady Abbess, of the House of Marleyland, preserved not her dignity or composure, better than the poor Portress who opened the doors for us. This was the effect of guilt, Master Secretary. *Quam difficile est crimen non prodere vultu!*" exclaimed the Steward, in an ecstacy of admiration at his own apt quotation.

"Perhaps without that stimulant to fear, the appearance of so many unexpected guests of our sex, within the walls, was sufficient to alarm a sisterhood of vestals," replied Lewen carelessly.

Shirley shook his head with an expression that equivocated between archness and grave contempt.

Lewen observed the gesture, but he preserved his silence. Perhaps his suffering it to pass without comment, proceeded from the low estimate he had formed of his companion, or, perhaps, from the little importance he attached to the subject, which Shirley appeared inclined to discuss largely. Those observations he had already made, seemed thrown out merely to elicit that shrewdness of remark to which opposition gives an opportunity of display, differing widely from the ebullition of feeling, or the anxious expression of

energetic interest. His countenance seemed arranged to one key-note, the tone of which never varied, which no skill could heighten or depress, unless himself vibrated the chord. And yet his features were pliant, and he affected not to give them immobility. As an ingenious piece of mechanism is made, by certain springs, to exhibit the various indications of animal existence, so there was vitality and even variety in the contracting and dilation of his brows, in the curving and the smiles of his lips; but there was no outward exhibition of internal emotion,—no fluctuations of feeling deepening the tint of his complexion, or giving momentary colour to a naturally colourless cheek,—no waves of emotion flowing over the whole, and rapidly chasing each other. Unless this very peculiarity might be considered as giving his physiognomy its decided characteristic, it possessed none. None of

the sudden irradiations of genius—none of the pathos of feeling—none of the sparkles of passion—imparted to his countenance that distinction so nobly stamped on his perfect features, or preserved in the mind of those who saw him, that conviction of the powers of his soul, which his first appearance had impressed on them. The eye demanded from a face so moulded, an intenseness of intellectual illumination, worthy of the tablet; and after having viewed him often, it turned away with a feeling of weariness and disappointment.

"Amongst these trembling vestals, your Lord, no doubt, recognized the Lady Joanna?" said Lewen inquiringly.

"Now we come to the very swivel on which my Lord's fate turned, the pith, as one may say, of the tree of his life," replied Shirley with importance. "Where, think you, we found the sister-

hood, and what even then was their employment? Why, they were in the chapel, and at prayer."

"The place of action and the occupation were equally adapted to them," said Lewen; "and if Cranmer or Cromwell interrupted them in such an act, it was an impiety that cried aloud to Heaven, a daring violation of God's sanctuary, a rending of the veil of the temple, which will—which must—draw down the vengeance of that Heaven, against which they have lifted themselves up; and if they both fall, where is the reformed church in England? They were the very Jachin and the Boaz of it, the pillars which some Samson must grasp, and dash them both piecemeal if he draw down ruin on himself, and perish amidst the wreck he shall have caused. Already has the Vicar-general fallen; and frail humanity, even though in the person of the pri-

mate of England, holds its honours and its existence by a very slender ligament."

Lewen spoke with a rapidity and an energy he had not before displayed. But whether his animation had been that of prayer or deprecation, whether he denounced ruin on the church under the impulse of hope or fear, the most acute could not have penetrated. Shirley, whose mind laboured with the events memory recalled, was too much engrossed by their arrangement to attend to so nice a distinction. Convinced that Lewen, as the Secretary of the Earl of Arding, was a disciple of the Lutheran Church, he viewed him entirely through the medium of that conviction, and admitted no impression that could shake it.

"Your imagination has got the start of my narrative, and is likely to keep it, unless thou canst contrive to summon

patience," resumed Shirley. "I may liken thee unto a hound hunting change; thou hast taken fresh scent, and art following another chase. They were in the chapel—true; they were praying—true again. Verily, they resembled those prayers which the misguided Israelites offered to that Moabitish god before whom they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire. I have told you that there was a terrible storm and so loud, that we heard not the pealing of the organ, or the voices of the choir. Well—the chapel was bright as the day with the lamps that were burning in it, as if blazing for some high festival, of which the Church of Rome has verily at least as many as days of fasting. At the altar stood the young Abbot of the monastery of De-la-pray; the ruins of which, I may observe, are within half a mile of our castle, just verging on the park-forest. Every body,

Catholic and Reformed, knew his reverence, who had overcome all the temptations offered to him in the world, to devote himself to God after the manner of his pattern and friend Ignatius de Loyola."

The eye of the Secretary turned quickly on that of the Steward—fixed it steadily—producing a pain in the optical nerve of Shirley, similar to that which might have been the effect of actual pressure. Shirley met it with an expression of wonder, which seemed no sooner to reach the understanding of Lewen, than his glance was withdrawn, and his countenance regained its usual grave tranquillity.

"Your interruption has broken the thread of my recollections," resumed Shirley, unwittingly testifying to the power of Lewen's glance by assimilating its effect to that of a verbal remark. "The young Abbot of De-la-pray stood,

as I was saying, decked with all the pomp of a Roman dignitary. They were employed in inhuming alive a young creature whose vocation lay elsewhere; and, prithee, Master Lewen, was this defensible?"

Lewen replied only by an inexpressive smile, which Shirley chose to translate as an acquiescence in that opinion which his query implied.

"Even then," continued the Steward, "even as we entered, they held the pall over her as she lay on the pavement near the altar: we stood silent for a minute's space, and its descent was suspended. The poor victim, roused by the interruption of the rites of her sacrifice, looked around her: my eye was on her: she half raised herself, pressing with her hand on the pavement. Never saw I a look, a face, so woe-begone as her's; all the misery of my Lady Joanna's future life never gave her eye so much

madness as it had when then it rested on my Lord; and a shriek burst from her scarcely-opened lips, *such* a shriek, ringing through the chapel, bounding from pillar to pillar, that supported the lofty vaulted roof, and drawing large drops of fear from my temples. It ceased; she fell again before the altar, and there was a moment's silence, as if we all expected the grave to give back its dead. My Lord was the first to break it. I shall not forget that night, whilst I have sense or memory left."

The Steward paused, oppressed by the vividness of his recollections. The face of Lewen was entirely shaded by his hand; when, after a short space, Shirley again recognised the countenance of his companion, its expression was placid as before, but it had deeper paleness.

" To pass over the convent scene as quickly as possible," he said, " I am

able to ascertain, by the present situation of the parties, that your Lord carried the novice from the sanctuary, and that the visitation terminated in the suppression of the monastery."

"Even so it was," returned Shirley. "My Lord brought my Lady to this very place, and he married her shortly, moreover, with the consent of her kinsfolk, and all her house."

"With their consent? Entirely with their consent?" said Lewen, in a tone that vibrated slightly with surprise.

"It was thus," replied Shirley: "the irregularities of the convent were discovered to be such as must, if published, bring its superior to condign punishment. Now, as that superior was, as I have told you, of the House of Marleyland, you will believe they were anxious that their nobility should not be contaminated by so disgraceful an exposure. It is easy to imagine what price my Lord set

on his own silence, and on his exerting his influence to secure that of others. In short, my Lady Abbess was quietly shipped off to Rome to give an account herself there, whilst the nuptials of my Lord and the Lady Joanna were celebrated with all the splendor due to such an occasion. Nevertheless, none of the House of Marleyland was present, which did not much check our mirth and our revels, they being of a gloomy cast, and of the old church withal,—not that I consider *that* as making much against them, an opinion which it would ill befit me to give, seeing my Lord permits my Lady to follow the bent of her inclinations in that matter, without let or molestation. Wherefore, as in duty bound, I shall suffer the point to pass without comment or animadversion."

"The unhappiness of the Earl of Arding and the Lady Joanna of Marleyland having been hitherto occasioned

by their enforced separation, it may naturally be supposed that their union,—which, if not ardently desired by the Lady's friends, was at least suffered by them,—terminated it," observed Lewen.

"So says the appearance, but what, the reality?" returned Shirley. "The point of their different faith, although scarcely noticed by *them* in the heyday of passion, must not be forgotten by *us*. During some months after their marriage, all was bright and tranquil. My Lady recovered her plumpness, and my Lord some portion of his early gaiety. To put a seal to the whole, a son was born, an event which seemed to make my Lord's cup of bliss run over—nor, indeed, was my Lady's much less. But, as the most patient of men said, 'Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards,'—and 'After joy, cometh grief.' And as the preacher remarketh, 'There is a time for all

things,' and the day of my Lord's pleasure having been, it was but natural to expect that the nights of sorrow would come. And they *did* come."

"They *did* come!" repeated Lewen, in a voice fluctuating between solemnity and tenderness of feeling.

"Aye, and heavily they came," added Shirley. "My Lady was just recovering her bloom and her beauty after the birth of her son, when a strange visitor appeared at our castle, who came immediately to the Countess. This was no other than the pious Abbot of De-la-pray, whose voice had almost separated my Lord and my Lady, when our seasonable interruption on that memorable evening prevented the completion of the sacrifice. From his visit may be dated all the misfortunes that came upon us. My Lady insisted on retaining him as her confessor, sorely against the will of my Lord, who

had scarcely the right of complaining, since he had suffered his love to conquer his sincerity, and had not openly avowed to my Lady his conviction of the errors of the ancient faith. Father Valerius (for he and the Abbot of De-la-pray are one), by his avowed condemnation of my Lady's marriage with an earthly husband, when, except in a very few points, she had been solemnly dedicated the spouse of Christ, and that marriage, moreover, being with an heretic, delivered her up to all the terrors of a distempered fancy, and an awakened conscience. *Then* peace quitted her, it is to be feared, for ever. But her child grew, and yet—proud as mothers are of the beauty of their children, and her's a son, *such* a son, an *only* son,—she took no pleasure in him. But she lacked not love for him; her life was but one thought of him: the boy perpetually drew forth her remorse for her

marriage with my Lord, by reminding her that she had brought him into the world, to render him a meet subject for eternal perdition. She has kneeled before my Lord supplicating that the spiritual education of the child might be left to her and father Valerius, until *he*—though his purpose was never shaken—has shown how largely he shared his mother's nature—for, he has wept! And yet, Master Secretary, my Lord's heart is no woman's heart, but it would rather and better face a legion of armed men, than a woman's tear."

Shirley paused; his reminiscences evidently softened him.

"And how terminated the conflict between the right and the expedient?" demanded Lewen, with a gravity that seemed deepened into sternness.

"Aye, Master Lewen—now indeed we touch on the point where the peace of my Lord and Lady was wrecked

never to rise again. The boy disappeared."

Shirley paused, to give Lewen an opportunity of expressing the surprise an event like this was calculated to excite. But the Secretary was silent. It appeared to Shirley, that this silence was the result of an astonishment too lively to be expressed by words.

"Aye," he resumed, "the boy disappeared! When or how he was conveyed away is one of those mysteries on which no man can speak. My Lord's madness, my Lady's agony,—mingled as it was with a bitter feeling, that her unblessed union had drawn down so heavy a curse,—that *she* was, and must be accounted, the source of whatever future misery might befal her offspring, of whatever guilt he might commit, of his final perdition,—you may well imagine. Now was the moment when the influence father Valerius had

hitherto been gradually acquiring over her, arrived at its height. His suggestions on the probable fate of her child seemed always to bring consolation with them."

"Did any suspicion attach to him on the ground of his being the instigator of the removal of the child, or at least the accessary to it?" demanded Lewen, with an accent of impatient inquiry, again pouring the full glance of his singular eye on Shirley.

"No, assuredly none," replied the Steward, with great distinctness and emphasis. "Slander never charged the confessor with any crime greater than that of exceeding attachment to the old church, which was not to be wondered at, seeing that from his rare piety in such extreme youth, he might reasonably aspire to a dignity commensurate with his renown. Not even my Lord looked on him with suspicion in

this case. Father Valerius, if he were the coldest bigot whose heart ever froze against the charities of life, could not have beheld the patient but acute grief of the father, the louder and more terrible despair of the mother, unmoved. *His* could not be the hand to stab, which incessantly poured balm into the wounds of both. Indeed his compassion for my Lord brought him so much out of the shade in which he had chosen hitherto to remain as my Lady's confessor, that Mr. Russell had almost begun to tremble for the perseverance of his friend and patron. But this was without reason. The soul of my Lord has the nature of that of his father; once decided in the path best for it, it swerves not to the right or to the left. God bless him!"

"God in his mercy bless *him*—bless *her!*" repeated Lewen, with fervent and deep aspiration.

Convinced that the interest the Secretary appeared to feel in the welfare of those into whose service he was about to enter, must have been elicited by the narrative to which he was so attentively listening, Shirley proceeded with that feeling so natural to the human mind—delight in believing that his memory and narrative talents were appreciated as accurately as was the importance of those events in which, from having been always stationary on the scene of their action, he believed himself to have taken a conspicuous part.

"After so fatal an event, the precautions that were taken to preserve a second infant—a daughter—may be imagined. The poor little Lady was guarded like a state prisoner, and never went out, even in the park, without as many guards as might have served for the king's yeomen. My Lady's expostulations with my Lord to be allowed

the entire control of my Lady Blanche, were more violent than those which he had so much difficulty in resisting for his son, and they were as unavailing. As soon as Lady Blanche's reason began to put forth shoots, my Lord sent her to his kinsman's, then the Marquis of Dorset, now the Duke of Suffolk, to be educated with his daughter the Lady Jane Grey."

"The arch-heretic!" said Lewen, with a voice of deep energy. Then with recovered calmness, he added, "At least so the adherents of the Roman church would denominate him."

"But *we* who are come out from the tents of Kedar, laud him," replied Shirley warmly; "though that the poor child should be sent away at an age when she cared more after a flawn than after all the masses the pope's servants could have celebrated, or all the sermons Martin Luther could have

preached, seemed hard. And then was my Lady weeping like Swithen, her grief rendered the more bitter, seeing that she was beset by a bull of Bashan, in shape of a seminary priest, which is to say, her sorrow was increased by the perpetual warnings of the child's perdition, which father Valerius poured into her ear without pity and without intermission. But my Lord was resolute, and the Lady Blanche has still been the companion of the Lady Jane Grey, and is as learned as pious, and as beautiful as the Duke of Suffolk's daughter; at least so says report, for Lady Blanche has not entered the castle walls since she was first torn away from the arms of her mother."

"A man inclined to form a harsh judgment of the Earl of Arding," said Lewen, "would censure his separating the mother and the daughter as a severe and most inhuman deed."

"Such an one," replied Shirley, "would do well to consider, that my Lord saw in the Lady Blanche her in whom all his honours were to be vested,—who might be his sole heir, as, indeed, the event has proved she will be. He was therefore anxious to have her brought up in that faith which would, hereafter, prevent there being any impediment to her matching into such a family as my Lord should approve. That this plan should be successful, it was absolutely necessary that she should be removed from the influence of a mother, whose soul was entirely devoted to another creed, and who, it might reasonably be supposed, would exert every ability to counteract those religious instructions her daughter would receive by my Lord's direction. Moreover my Lord was anxious to place her in a more secure abode than his own castle, which, experience in the loss of

his son had taught him, was not so impenetrable to ambuscade as to the attacks of open force."

"And since their separation, the mother and daughter have not frequently met?" said Lewen.

"No, and on this ground," returned Shirley.—"When the Lady Blanche had been absent some months, the Countess began to regain her usual state of gloomy resignation. My Lord would not, as you may well think, choose to hazard the tearing open of her wounds afresh, when they seemed to be healing, and so hitherto they have been separated. But now, Lady Blanche attains womanhood, and my Lord, believing the work for which she was removed to be completed, sends his mandate to summon her home, and she quits Broadgate when the Duke of Suffolk with his family leaves Leicestershire for the city."

Shirley paused. A short, quick step

passed by the door of the apartment, spirited but not heavy. A smart rattling with a cane was the immediate prelude of the entrance of a well-equipped page, whose quick eye rested archly on the face of Shirley as he made him an obeisance, which had in it more of mockery than reverence, and which, moreover, seemed to give the youth an opportunity, in recovering himself, of adding an inch to the stature he possessed when in a natural posture.

" So ho, master Shirley !" said he, in a voice that had a clear ring very pleasing to the ear ; " I called on you in passing to my Lady's apartment, by way of being the first to bring to you the report you will presently hear. I have been to the town on my Lady's business, and on coming along the common, as the Devil would have it, the black mare, Bab, threw me ; no, that is to say, she would not stand on

her four pasterns, but thought proper to knock one of them under her, which very naturally ended in her breaking it, by which, I believe, I may be said to have thrown her."

"*Domine, dirige nos!*" ejaculated the Steward, raising his hands, the palms pressing against each other, to a level with his chest.

"Luther defend us from these rags of Rome, these patches of Popery!" exclaimed the Page, displaying his talents for mimicry at the Steward's expense, by adopting precisely the same cadence of voice, and the same peculiarity of action. "One might have suspected the sincerity of any person uttering such an aspiration, whose zeal for the true church was less ascertained than pious Master Shirley's."

"And thou hast verily broken the leg of the best mare in my Lord's stables, and yet standest before me with such

impudent assurance!" said Shirley, with great indignation.

"Verily, yea!" replied the Page, raising his heels a little from the ground, and instantly touching it again. "Moreover, I have sent for the horse-leach, who is of opinion that the animal must be dispatched forthwith."

"And what lie, Philip Altham, wilt thou be pleased to relate to my Lord withal? Or dost thou think to curry favour with him by such an exploit?" demanded Shirley.

"My business lieth altogether with my Lady, as thine doth, it seems, with the whole household," replied the Page, with undismayed effrontery. "So hie thee to my Lord, and make out for his ear what tale shall best please thee, whilst I wend unto my Lady, and tell her of this mishap. Good night, Master Steward; my ride has tired me, and I will presently to bed; first warning thee

not to let an accident sit heavily on thy heart, which presses but lightlyon mine, or it may, perchance, counteract the effect of thy potations, a consequence which I shall devoutly pray against." And with another bow of mockery to the Steward, and one something more courteous to the stranger, the Page lightly withdrew.

There was a silence of some seconds, during which Shirley made sundry efforts to recover his equanimity. But as a gun, when its barrel contains too much powder, will surely burst with a violent explosion, so the particles of wrath which the Page had infused into the mind of the Steward, flew out, carrying with them the following ebullition:

"Ah, that boy, that boy!" said he, turning towards the door whence the youth had disappeared, his eyes contracted with a glance of peculiar shrewdness, accompanied by a correspondent

gesture of the head ; " my Lady's favour will be the ruin of him ! Aye, and not my Lady's only, but that of the principal personages of this household, myself excepted, before whose understanding there are not the same mists, I seeing him in his every-day apparel, and they only in his holiday suits. And talking of apparel, to flounce and trick out the lad in silken garments like those in which you have now seen him, is enough to render him the prey of that pride born of Lucifer, which he would not have felt, if clad, as had better beseemed him, in a gabardine. His face, as fair and bright as the day, is but a bad index of a heart as dark as a November night. And yet, verily, that face of his hath, it appears to me, wrought for him not a little with my Lady. For the judgment of women, Master Secretary, is apt to be sadly warped by silken rags, and patches, and a point device accoutrement, and such like pigments of the body."

"And yet, methought, there was a strange beauty mingling with the wild fire of his countenance," observed Lewen musingly.

"It is one of the masks in which Satan is accustomed to bedeck his imps," returned the Steward; his violence getting very much the start of his moderation, and throwing his charity completely in the rear. "The irreligious child of perdition! the perfect hypocrite! his sweet words being but the honey in the body of the dead lion, of which they that eat, must, by the edict, die!"

The Steward took a very large draught, perhaps for the philosophical purpose of drinking down his passion, a recipe prescribed in the story-book.

"Of what communion is he?" demanded Lewen, taking advantage of the Steward's pause.

"Of none—or rather of all," returned Shirley. "Neither Catholic nor Reformed, and yet the first to my Lady

and Father Valerius, and to Mr. Russell half the last, cajoling the worthy man by pretending a desire after things not of this world, and a thirsting after spiritual meat, and a wish to be able to learn to eschew the evil, and to choose the good, affecting to believe that Mr. Russell alone can give him the butter and honey which shall bestow on him this power of discernment. Verily, that he is an infidel seems a fair conclusion; for I pray you to tell me, Master Secretary, whether he who professes faith in all creeds by turns, can care much after any?"

"Has he been long one of the household of Arding?" demanded Lewen, evading the Steward's question.

"No, and therein lies the mystery of the ascendancy he has gained here, which could not have been obtained unless the father of lies, which is Beelzebub, or Satan, had given him a power not of

this earth," replied Shirley, easily following Lewen's view halloo of other game. "Six months since, the castle was happily void of such an inmate; *then* we went on calmly enough. No idle frolicking amongst my Lady's maidens—no dancing—no singing—no merriment, except on holidays. *Then* I, the Steward of this establishment, could appear amongst them, at proper seasons, without affording a butt for the quips of Mistress Alice, or the gibes of Mistress Beatrice, or the cranks of that turn-up-nosed, black-eyed daughter of Eve, Lettice, who, umquhile was as civil and well-conducted as one could have desired. That she should be so led away by the vanities of a cap with a feather in it, and a doublet of sky-blue silk!"

How much soever the general manner of the Page might have incurred the disapprobation of Shirley, it was evident

that a private feeling of jealousy rendered him peculiarly keen in detecting the faults of the youth's character.

"By whose recommendation was he enrolled a member of this establishment?" demanded Lewen.

"He is my Lady's Page, and that clearly informs you that he came here upon the responsibility of Father Valerius, and that he is under his peculiar protection," returned Shirley, in a manner sufficiently indicative of his disapprobation of the Confessor's influence over the Countess of Arding.

"I am to infer, then, that he is devoted to the interests of Father Valerius?" demanded Lewen, sending a slow and searching glance on the unchanging face of the Steward.

"Aye," replied Shirley, "to Father Valerius and to his—I must not say his *enemy*, the Confessor hath but one enemy according to knowledge—the

Devil, I mean, craving your pardon, Master Lewen; to his spiritual *opposer*, then, even to Mark Russell is Philip Altham the slave ready to obey his commands, to interpret his signs, to forestal his wishes. And now here is an instance of the weakness of human judgment. The hawk's eye of Father Valerius pounces continually on the boy, and yet fastens not on his heart, to draw thence the deep and dark secrets, of which it seems to me the abode. Cunning distances sagacity, and impudence is mistaken for candour. The cautious, the slow-judging, spiritual guide of my Lord, favours this youth exceedingly. In short—your cup is empty;—in short, both the Priests, the Seminary and the Chaplain, are deluded by his alacrity in their separate service, and believe that he can be faithful to both, though it is written 'Thou canst not serve two masters!'"

Shirley paused; the flagon was empty, and of the once-blazing fire only the embers remained.

"Conversation is a time-killer," said the Steward, "and in talking of the former days of my Lord and Lady, the night has worn unmarked."

"It has," replied Lewen. He paused a few seconds, then added—"On the morrow, then, I shall be conducted to the presence of the Earl of Arding? If I be able to gain as much of his favour as yonder Page has gained of my Lady's, I will endeavour still to preserve my humility and my honesty." This was spoken with a slight smile.

"To endure *two* such inmates would not be in the power of man," said the Steward fervently. "And, moreover, Lettice would curl her nose more than ever, and would season her wit with even more sauce than at present.

One evil is more tolerable than two ; and now, Master Secretary, I will see that you be conducted to your chamber."

CHAPTER II.

"He was a man most like to virtue; in all
And every action nearer to the gods
Than men, in nature; of a body as fair
As was his mind; and no less reverent
In face, than fame: he could so use his state,
Temp'ring his greatness with his gravity,
As it avoided all self-love in him,
And spight in others." *Ben. Jonson.*

"I am not mad, I would to heav'n I were,
For then 'tis like I should forget myself.
Oh, if I could, what grief should I forget!
I am not mad; too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity.
Oh, father, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heav'n;
If that be, I shall see my boy again."
Shakspeare.

"Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peasecod, or a codling when 'tis almost an apple: He is very well-favour'd, and he speaks shrewishly." *Ib.*

SHIRLEY met Lewen at the morning-meal with feelings very much inclined to extreme cordiality. His in-

terest in the Secretary originated in various sources; all of which were pleasing, because they severally and conjointly operated on his mind as proofs of his own importance. In the first place, his having obtained that appointment in the Earl of Arding's household, did, if the links in the chain of secondary and primary causes were to be carefully touched, commence in himself. Lewen had saved the life of Archibald Shirley; Archibald Shirley, actuated by feelings of natural gratitude, had been desirous of essentially benefitting his preserver. He had done so, by procuring him admission into the family of the Earl of Arding, and by the respectable position in which he had succeeded in placing him. But how did Archibald Shirley possess the *power* of thus proving the high sense he entertained of the debt which he had contracted to Lewen? How, but because he had been the Page

of the Countess of Arding? And who procured *him* that honour? It was yielded to him on account of the long services which the House of Arding had received from that of Shirley—services the importance of which had gradually risen in estimation, until the series, terminating in the Steward, Benjamin Shirley, had attained a point of elevation which continually repaid to their representative the drudgery of past ages. *Here*, by a very simple process of reasoning, the primary cause was vested in the self-complacent Steward. But this was remote, compared with that more immediate one which he had contemplated, with exceeding satisfaction, on his awakening from a sleep that had dispersed all the confusion of intellect,—which, as we are engaged in tracing effect to cause, we may remark originated exclusively in the fumes produced by imbibing more than sufficient

of the juice of the grape. True, Archibald Shirley had occupied the situation of Page in that establishment, and had discharged the duties of his office completely to my Lady's satisfaction. But even admitting that he had exercised them up to the present moment, he was not (and there was no probability that he would be) on such terms with my Lord, as would induce him to receive a chief domestic on his single recommendation. He was a Catholic, and therefore incapacitated from serving a Protestant noble, either in his own person, or by the agency of others. His actual situation rendered him completely ignorant of all that passed within the walls of the castle of Arding, except as he gained information by the communication of Benjamin Shirley. It was by this channel that he had learned the sudden death of the late Secretary ; if he had been ignorant of it, it would

have been impossible that he should serve his preserver by recommending him as the occupant of a vacancy which, *to him*, was already occupied. However, spirally the Steward's lines of thought might evolve, they resulted very satisfactorily, by finding a point of termination in himself. Moreover, even if Archibald had been regularly informed of every event passing within the castle, and, amongst others, of that which had occurred fortunately enough for Lewen, what would it have availed him?—Could *he*, a Catholic, worse still, a Monk, have presumed to address the Earl of Arding on *such* a subject; to offer him a domestic whose recommendations must appear by the medium of Archibald Shirley?—Those recommendations were of avail, only because they were conveyed to the Earl by the channel of the Steward Shirley. Who, except him, possessed sufficient influ-

ence to overcome such opposition as had been manifested to the reception of a Secretary coming from so Catholic a country as Spain, whose vouchers were Catholics,—opposition, too, proceeding from that quarter where it had most weight, from the Chaplain, Mr. Russell? No; Shirley felt that his nephew might have been in danger of death daily,—that Lewen might have as frequently preserved him,—and yet that his gratitude could never have operated so essentially to the advantage of his preserver, but for *himself*.

Delighted by the logical precision of his analytic method of reasoning, and gratified by the conviction that Lewen must depend on him for a very considerable portion of the comfort of life, the Steward contemplated the silver brooch, skilfully deciphering its motto —"*prou de pis—peu de pairs—point de plus*."—He determined to protect

the young man with his utmost ability, and to alleviate the awe with which the Earl's presence must naturally impress him, by entering that presence with him, and by his familiarity with that powerful noble, wearing off the timidity of the Secretary, who would at once be rendered perfectly acquainted with his Lord's affability and condescension, and with his own importance with him.

With a cordiality, the result of such reflections, retrospective and anticipative, Shirley, as we have said, met Lewen at the morning-meal. The sensations with which he was affected at that meeting, afforded his active mind an opportunity of commenting on the discrepancy between the data from which he had reasoned, and the facts presented to him. He had resolved to protect Lewen, to prepare him for his meeting with the Earl, by commenting on that noble's facility to his dependants, with whom

alone he seemed to lose that pride of birth which continually appeared to those, whom rank and fortune seemed to stamp his equals. He was prevented from acting on this resolution by Lewen's calmly inquiring, whether the Earl would be visible to him almost immediately.

Shirley gave him the necessary information on this point, and made various efforts to bring forth that lecture with which his fancy laboured. But the calm gravity of Lewen effectually rendered his efforts abortive. The Steward experienced a recurrence of that same uncomfortable feeling of distance and inferiority, with which he had been assailed in the first moments of his companionship with the Secretary. And yet Lewen did not describe that line which encircled himself, by pride or repulsive haughtiness. He spoke with fluency to Shirley on the office which he

was on the point of occupying about the Earl of Arding, and descanted largely on the duties it enjoined, mentioning each with a full comprehension of it, and with a gravity which seemed to indicate, that he possessed the will and the power to render his action correspondent with his knowledge of the right path. With this gravity there was mingled much gentleness. There was with him evidently no effort to keep Shirley in that position from which all his struggles could not extricate him. On the part of Lewen there was no assertion of superiority, no desire of enforcing his own conviction of it on the mind of another. His constant calmness, rarely rising to energy, never sinking to stupidity, was perhaps the feature of his mind which effectually preserved him from a familiarity in which himself did not indulge. His manner had none of that loftiness, that bearing, " haught

and high," which is frequently the attendant on high birth, and the mask of imbecility of intellect, or poverty of talent. Supreme self-command, visible in all he said or looked, distinct from reserve, but diametrically removed from easy confidence, was, perhaps, that distinguishing characteristic which separated him from others. Indebted to Shirley for his introduction to his present situation, and probably depending on the Steward for his continuance in it, there was no effort to conciliate, if there was no attempt to repel. The gentleness of Lewen's manner rendered the depression of Shirley's feelings of self-complacency the more remarkable. The grave sternness sometimes contracting his brow, produced no farther effect, never communicating itself to his tones or his address. He now spoke fully and explicitly to the Seneschal of his desire to ingratiate himself with

the Earl. This very openness indicated, that the means he intended to pursue towards the attainment of Lord Arding's favour and confidence, were manly and honourable. It indicated, that the path he had traced out for himself was the high-way of assiduous service and unimpeachable integrity,—that the bye-path of craft and dissimulation was imperceptible to his powers of vision. By speaking evidently as if he felt that his was a character to which suspicion could not possibly attach, he effectually distanced it. He spoke of his plans with so much candour, that it was impossible to charge him with reserve. He advised with Shirley on certain points dubious to himself, but in which the latter must be well informed; and he listened to the opinions of the other with an acquiescence which, if it did not amount to deference, was very remote from contempt, thus entirely

exonerating himself from any possible accusation of pride. But Shirley found it impossible to offer this advice or these opinions in the way of harangue, magisterially ; he involuntarily couched them in that form which the questions of Lewen almost dictated. In short, the Steward felt himself under the influence of an imperious necessity which he could not resist, which appeared not in any tangible shape, the existence of which could be ascertained only in its effects ; and whilst he could not charge Lewen with pride or reserve, he felt his own sphere of action circumscribed as if bounded by both.

" 'Tis a strange youth,"—thus the Steward soliloquized internally,—" The like unto him I have not before seen, and therefore I am not able to ascertain, by reflection or comparison, in what class to place him. In sending him hither, Archibald should not have

forgotten the argument to the piece; it might have helped us, or rather I may say, it might have helped *myself* to comprehend the young man, mysel who am truly the person his propei conduct seems most to concern. My Lord was never much given to thinking that an earthquake might break out beneath the smoothest surface. He will conclude that Lewen is wise, learned, and pious, because Archibald Shirley assures us that he is so, and because the youth himself, like David, is of a fair countenance, though not very ruddy withal, being, indeed, of the colour of those imitations of men and women which my Lord hath of late received from foreign lands, sculptured by the chisel of that Italian Michael Angelo. Verily I may take much credit to myself, that, in this matter, my Lord was pleased to consider my faithful services, rather than the cautions of Mr. Russell,

and did not scruple to receive into his household the preserver of my nephew and godson, although Archibald is a Catholic, and as rigid a Monk as Ignatius de Loyola himself. It behoves me, on this very account, to watch our new Secretary narrowly, and to prevent his abusing that confidence which my Lord may perchance repose in him. Happily, the youth seems of a quiet temper, and by no means spurns my counsels or derides them, proving, in this point, a very fortunate contrast to that imp of Satan, Philip Altham, my Lady's Page, who, I thank Heaven, came hither on no recommendation of mine, but solely on the word of Father Valerius. What good there can be in him, I have not yet been able to discover; indeed if there be any, it is a nut buried in a husk too thick to be peeled away;"—and being led by this train of reflection, to the memory of all

the wild pranks of the boy so well beloved by the Countess, and not disliked by the Earl, he regarded Lewen with the greater complacency, because he seemed to him endowed with quite as much beauty as the Page (which was considered, by Shirley, Altham's highest qualification), and with a superiority of judgment soaring to a point infinitely beyond comparison. Thus he naturally argued, that being equal to the Page in all good points, and possessing those which Altham had not, the Secretary would eventually attain a higher degree of favour than the Page had done, the credit of which must naturally revert to the Steward.

When the hour came, in which Lewen's attendance on the Earl was commanded, Shirley regarded him with a scrutiny more intense than he had before offered. The Secretary was visibly affected. The shade on his brow

deepened, and his mouth was very slightly agitated by some emotion. Shirley felt himself approaching more nearly to equality with Lewen; he was able to comprehend his emotion; he could understand the embarrassment natural to a young man, now approaching, for the first time, a presence so dignified. He expected that, when actually before the Earl, Lewen would be completely overwhelmed; and with an anxiety of expectation, totally devoid of malice to its object, he awaited that moment as the period of his own superiority's asserting itself, when he would appear in that character he had so ardently desired to attain, and which was, perhaps, not the less the object of his ambition, because, hitherto, it had appeared unattainable, —that of Lewen's protector.

But as they paced the stately corridor in their way to the Earl's apartments, Shirley, whose eye was anxi-

ously fastened on the countenance of Lewen, observed that his emotion perceptibly diminished, and that, when the folding-doors were thrown open, although he paused a moment, passing his hand over his brows before he crossed the threshold, he, in the next instant, entered with a calmness that seemed synonymous with dignity, and a firmness that was identified with unshrinking courage.

The group was striking. The countenances, now for the first time glancing on each other, were strikingly dissimilar,—were, in many respects, decidedly contrasted. The light streaming through the painted windows, broken into a variety of shades, in the combination of which a deep crimson strongly predominated, was highly picturesque, and contributed, by the hue it cast on every object, to heighten the imposing effect of the whole.

At the upper end of the apartment stood the Earl of Arding. His figure once towering above the common stature, now gently inclined, having gained, from the struggles and misfortunes of his singular life, the bending incident to age. His complexion had lost all that glowing brilliancy of colouring which, in former years, had so remarkably distinguished it. A sickly paleness was diffused over it, evidently resulting from morbid melancholy. His forehead, ample and white, was very much exposed, and surmounted by short curls, whose sable was mingled with silver. His brows, from habitual contraction, had lost their haughty curve, and crossed his forehead in two dark right lines, just separated at the near extremity. His large black eyes glanced from beneath them, with an expression, the fire of which was extinguished for ever, and whose pensive-

ness equalled their lustre. The curve of his pale lip was shaded by small curled mustaches, which extended to a small pointed beard, of the same colour as his hair. A rectilinear nose completed the tournure of a decidedly oval countenance. The component parts of his face were good, their combination admirable. He stood a portrait of patient resignation to all the past had brought on him, yet retaining sufficient interest after the future, to stamp him still a man,—still subject to the vicissitudes of human things. That occasional sparkle of the eye which hope, however infrequent, imparts to common sufferers, never illumined his. Neither was there the agitation of fear. The cup of which he had already drunk had been so bitter, that the infusion of more bitterness seemed impossible; and the evils he had already suffered had been so irremediable that alleviation could not be ex-

pected even by enthusiasm. But to him —this man of grief, there was yet one anxious point in the vast hemisphere of existence—He had a daughter. Here was the source of those feelings which enrolled him among the mass of mortality, that daily do and suffer. Yet even on this subject, so completely had his mind, by constant suffering, lost its elasticity, that the chord of hope was scarcely touched before its faint vibration ceased. But his resignation prevented the domination of fear. One eye was fixed on the tomb, the other on heaven. Mortal feelings, therefore, passed over him with a transience that left no permanent trace on his countenance. This was the situation of the mind which animated that affecting countenance on which Lewen gazed so intensely, that every other power of mental or physical organization appeared absorbed in that of sight. Un-

able to trace the impressive effect to its complication of causes, he was sensibly touched by what was comprehensible. Misfortune seemed to shed around the head of this distinguished man, whose youth had been radiant by a blaze of illustrious actions, a halo that was at once sacred and peculiar. Standing now in the crimson beam of light that flowed through the casement, his countenance illuminated by its mellow tint, his whole appearance softened by it, he appeared something holy, though earthly,—a combination of all that suffering man should be in the decline of a stormy existence. The vessel had escaped wreck, but; bereaved of its trophies, it remained a memento of danger and suffering: the man still lived, but it seemed as if the hand of death had passed over him, sweeping away with it the bloom and the buoyancy of life.

Shirley, still anxious to penetrate the character of Lewen, by the effect which the appearance of others would produce on him, observed him with the most unrelaxing scrutiny, as his eye was fixed on the Earl. He could not analyze the mingled expression of Lewen's countenance. He thought he detected a feeling of reverence approaching to awe, sometimes approximating to a softening tenderness, that, to the wondering imagination of Shirley, appeared incomprehensible. But if this effect of some latent sentiment were inexplicable to him, it was succeeded by others which elicited a feeling of astonishment that distanced all comparison. This was a decided contraction of brow, a curving of the mouth, evidently marking strong and irrepressible disapprobation. Once, Shirley fancied, that he saw a sudden and momentary shuddering shake the whole

frame of Lewen, evidently indicating horror. But with all these struggling and contending variations of countenance, there was mingled an air of respect towards the Earl, which its subject contrived to display, without, in any manner, losing that singular appearance of imposing dignity which had repulsed and annoyed the Steward. The mind of the latter did not lose the impression Lewen made on it at this moment, when the cause had disappeared. And very soon that cause existed only in memory. For Lewen speedily escaping from all unusual emotion, appearing to throw it from him with the air of a man to whom self-command was so habitual, that it was matter of surprise even to himself, that he could, for a single moment, lose it—stood before the Earl with uplifted eye, and immoveably placid brow, his air giving to his figure a dignity almost inconsistent

with the lowness of his stature, recalling to Shirley, in all their original strength, the feelings which had occupied him, when Lewen was first ushered into his apartment.

The Earl, having stood a few moments, in silent contemplation of his new Secretary, addressed Lewen with a slight, but courteous inclination of the body, in a voice whose tone lost nothing of its clearness, by the melancholy of its intonations.

"You were recommended hither by Archibald Shirley, the nephew of our Seneschal, and formerly the Page of Lady Arding," he said. "We accept his recommendation; for during his service to us, we have ever found him trusty and well-deserving. Moreover, we desired to prove our high appreciation of the fidelity of our ancient chief domestic, Benjamin Shirley, by giving him the power thus to testify his gra-

titude to a man who has rendered him an essential service."

The Earl paused for an instant. The Steward bowed—rubbed his eyes—bowed again, profoundly conscious of the additional grace his lord was conferring on him, by thus recurring to the value he attached to his servant's long career of dutiful service. His eye glanced at Lewen, endeavouring to penetrate whether this happy allusion had not imparted to him a higher sense of the consequence of his yesternight's companion. But the Secretary's countenance was gravely placid as usual, and Shirley consoled himself for the disappointment inflicted by that immoveable tranquillity of expression, by the hope that the invariable condescension of the Earl's manner to him, would kindle that respect for him in the mind of Lewen, which he the more longed to inspire, because it appeared impracticable.

"But," resumed the Earl, "although

we have listened to our own feelings, and have obeyed the dictates of our gratitude, which always impels us to testify our favour towards Shirley, by any means within the compass of our ability, I must remark to you, that it is not usual that the members of the ancient superstition should interest themselves in procuring an appointment for any enlightened individual of our reformed religion, and it is still less usual that such an application should prove successful,—that weshould permit a person coming under the disadvantages of that introduction, to enrol himself amongst our retinue, without great caution and strict scrutiny. We are contented to consider the necessity of these as superseded, by the pledge which we receive for your fidelity in the long-tried services of our Steward."

"Permit me once again, my Lord," (exclaimed a person standing near Lord Arding), "to enter my protest against

this measure. It is not only necessary that an action should not be immediately hurtful; we must consider it in its bearings, in its probable, even in its possible consequences. We must so act, that good may come from all we do. Let us do nothing idly. We are watchmen, who must not only repel danger when it overtakes us, but look out for it, anticipate it, commence our defences against it, even so soon as its remote approach shall be perceptible, or even suspected. Highly as all moral feelings are to be appreciated when they emanate from that source which imparts to them life, from pure and undefiled faith, we must be careful that we do not suffer minor points to interfere with claims ten thousand-fold more important. 'I would not for a moment, be supposed to impugn the long-tried fidelity of your Steward; but, my Lord, are you to suffer your

gratitude for this fidelity to interfere with a concern which, in the present posture of affairs, becomes even alarmingly momentous? From the best of men, we can only *hope* honesty and virtue; the power of glancing into the human heart, the Almighty has reserved for himself alone. It is long since Shirley has had communication with his nephew by any other medium than that of letters. By this means Archibald has been able always to assume the most plausible appearance, secure from detection, if, indeed, it *were* only an appearance, by reason of the remoteness of his abode rendering him perfectly safe from that discovery which the reports of others might make. What is Archibald Shirley at this moment—what has he ever been? Always a Catholic, entirely devoted to the Countess, and under the immediate control of the confessor, Valerius, his

spiritual father. Even this circumstance should have rendered him an object of suspicion to you, my Lord. You should very cautiously have hesitated in receiving one whose office places him so immediately about your person, from the recommendation of such an individual. In such a case hesitation would have been prudence,—suspicion, self-defence. But what is the actual position of the man, who thus intrudes on you a secretary of *his* appointment? He is a *Monk*—a Monk of the order of Jesus—a Monk in pupillage to Ignatius de Loyola—a Monk of that order, whose principal tenet enforces it as a matter of conscience, that its professors should aim, by every action, at the subversion and utter destruction of any new modes of faith, all of which they call heresies; that they should put forth every power of their soul for the effecting of such a purpose;

that fraud, guile, even violence, are permitted, if employed in the attainment of such an end; in a word, that *all* means are sanctified *by* such an end.' When they made the Bible,—that rock of our salvation,—that only sure tower of our spiritual defence,—a sealed book to the race of men who were to be saved by an implicit belief in doctrines they were not permitted to examine, *they* no longer felt themselves bound to make it the standard of their life, the rule of their actions. They had no fear of being reproached with inconsistency by their several flocks, because they had cunningly put it out of the power of the laity to discover the existence of that inconsistency. They, therefore, never thought it necessary to remember that they were forbidden *to do evil, that good might come of it.* For what deeply-hidden purpose may the man who now stands before us be sent

hither? I call my God to witness, that I would be free from the blood of all men; that I desire to think well of the whole race of my brethren in mortality; but I may not act as if mankind were, in very truth, what my inclination would suppose them. They *are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know them?* My Lord, my Lord—beware how you carelessly throw a fire-brand into the midst of the garner; it may consume the wheat in its own destruction. In this unhappily divided household, caution is doubly necessary. Wolves are abroad; let us be careful that we admit them not into our fold. Because your benevolence prompts the wish of doing an acceptable pleasure to a faithful servant, will you, therefore, render yourself guilty of the souls of men? Take care, my Lord, that your act be not a selfish gratification. So much evil is

interwoven with the good of the very best of us, that we must incessantly 'watch and pray that we enter not into temptation.' Too many deluded and sleeping souls already inhabit here; let us not tempt the wrath of Heaven by incautiously yielding to them a power and a strength which they can attain only by our own inadvertence, lest in these walls dragons shall dwell, and wild beasts shall inhabit, and satyrs shall dance. Who shall confirm the good report given to yonder youth? We ask for the Secretary of the Earl of Arding, other credentials than the assurances of a Monk! Where are his friends, his kinsfolk, and his acquaintances. My Lord, if it be your pleasure, suffer me to put some questions to this young man, and let us abide by the answers he shall give."

The Earl bowed assentingly.

The whole of this address had been

delivered in a voice, and with a manner, whose energy defeated all design of interruption in his auditors. The very depth of his tones was sufficient to arrest attention, but their variety detained it; and without the charm of a single musical cadence, they produced on the ear the effect of the most perfect harmony. His utterance was very rapid, and yet as clear as the most deliberate enunciation could possibly have made it. In his whole manner there was a force and a fire inconceivably splendid, that was frequently to be found amongst the preachers of both sects at this era, but more particularly in those of the reformed church, who, by having new doctrines to promulgate, were animated by an ardour similar to that which was a great engine in promoting the success of the apostolic divines in the first age of Christianity. There was always some old point to combat, which naturally

elicited that energy incident to opposition; some prejudice to destroy, which early habit had inculcated and indulgence strengthened. Or if, on the contrary, a new topic were to be brought forward which monkish policy or superstition had completely shadowed from the general view of man, a warmth naturally arose, the offspring of zeal, and of a confirmed opinion of its necessity. In the whole of the manner of the person who had addressed the Earl of Arding, there was a magnificent eloquence appearing as much in gesture and countenance as in words, and more in the variety and depth of his intonations, perhaps, than in either. It was as impossible to refuse attention to his oratory, as to lose the remembrance of it. Lewen, who had been singularly and powerfully impressed by it, turned his eye full on the speaker, as if to pierce into the very heart of him who possessed

so effective a weapon of touching the passions, and of moulding the minds of men.

He saw a man of a stature naturally somewhat low, which, at this moment, opposed to the towering height of the Earl, appeared but just not diminutive. His face was oval, somewhat elongated; his features of the strongest and most acute Roman cast. His eyes were bright with all the radiance of enthusiasm, pouring streams of fire from their full orbs, their brilliance appearing the more remarkable, because it was not aided, as is frequently the case, by an imposing colour; for they were of a deep, cloudy gray. His complexion was pale, even to utter lifelessness; his forehead entirely bald; the short curling locks of hair on the back of his head, and his narrow brows completely grey, exposed this cadaverous paleness, without the relief of a shadow. His whole figure

was rendered awkward and displeasing by an ungraceful stoop, which inflicted a sensation of disappointment on those who had listened to his speech, by seeming to destroy that expectation of energetic character which his discourse so forcibly excited. His whole person was awkwardly combined. The strength of his limbs was strangely inappropriate to the contracted chest and narrow waist; and the excessive smallness of his hands and feet made a contrast to the muscular limbs to which they were appendages, almost hideous. Lewen slightly scanned the whole figure of the man; but he paused on the eye, momentarily withdrawing his own, then recurring to the object of his scrutiny. That eye whose power seemed infinite, whose eloquence irresistible, gave the mind a sensation of terror similar to the feeling a disembodied soul might be supposed to produce. It appeared the vehicle of soul,

rather than the organ of sight, singular, radiant, and terribly bright.

But beneath the power of that eye, Lewen's quailed not. He dared its glance, and, in retaining, defied it. He permitted to be seen of himself just so much as suited him ; farther than that point, he was impervious to all. He presented to the searching looks of Mark Russell, a calm steady countenance of self-reliance, which was not only the cover of his soul, but an impenetrable shield to every thought.

" In questioning you as a suspicious object, young man," Russell began, " if I offend against the innocent, as a Christian, I ask your forgiveness. As the chaplain of my Lord, the Earl of Arding, I consider it my duty to inquire minutely into the pretensions of those who aim at entering his household. My first duty I owe to God ; my next to him. I should ill discharge either,

if I were to permit the enrollment of a new member into this retinue, without extreme caution. We are not ignorant of the basis on which our true religion stands in this island; and, whilst we believe it possible that the pious of all creeds shall attain everlasting redemption, admitting that they blind not themselves to conviction, we are anxious, as far as in us lies, to convert this possibility to probability, almost to confidence, in the case of those who are thrown into our immediate sphere; and we would not willingly admit amongst them any individual who would have an interest in deluding their understandings and perverting their hearts. You come hither under the patronage of my Lord's trust-worthy domestic, Benjamin Shirley. Of his fidelity we are assured, and so far as depends on him, your credentials are unexceptionable; neither do we except against them. But he does

not offer to his Lord in you, the son of an ancient friend, whose family and faith are as well known to him as his own; for in that case, caution would have been superfluous. On the contrary, a desire to evince his affection for his nephew Archibald Shirley, has been the sole motive of his introducing you hither. What has he learnt of you from this Monk, his kinsman? That you are of the Protestant communion, and that your name is William Lewen! Of neither of these we have any proof; but suppose them correct—suppose that, on these points, we are well-informed—where were you born—who were your parents—where were you educated?"

"So please you, my Lord," returned Lewen, in his usual grave manner, which was withal calmly and patiently respectful, addressing himself to the Earl, and rather disregarding Russell; "the names of my parents I may not

declare in this presence, or at this moment. Suffice it, they were such as might seem to open to the aim of their offspring a more ambitious destiny than the office of secretary to a subject, even though that subject be the Earl of Arding. For conscience sake I was removed from their abode; for conscience sake, I was educated abroad; for conscience sake, I prefer dependence here, to renown and dignity elsewhere: and for conscience sake, I persevere in the only mystery I affect, a mystery which goes no farther than the concealment of a name, and which will not render my fidelity to your service more questionable, or my religious belief more suspicious.

"I was born in England—do you decide for me—I appeal to your judgment. Have I not the tongue of an Englishman? Could imposture give to a foreigner the native use of your language thus? On this point I may

surely claim implicit credence;—the Shibboleth will be my passport even to you, reverend sir," turning full on Russell.

"The causes of my removal from my paternal home," he continued, "are not uncommon in these times of discord and division. One of my parents was devoted to the ancient faith, with the zealous affection of a martyr, the other professed the doctrines of Luther with the ardour of a new convert. Fearful that I should early imbibe heresy, that parental friend whose power tempted the deed, separated me from the other, and I was sent to those places where the true light shines most brilliantly."

"To Germany?" said Russell, in the tone of a demand.

Lewen signed acquiescence, and proceeded.

"The education given to me was such

as will enable me to discharge those duties which my situation of secretary to the Earl of Arding will impose on me, I trust, with unmixed satisfaction to yourself. When I was about to be thrown on the world, I desired to enlarge my mind by the contemplation of men of different nations, each marked perhaps by qualities indigenous to the climate in which they are cast. I had seen much and reflected more, when, at length, I directed my journey towards Spain, and was the means of preserving the life of the man to whom I am indebted for my introduction here.

"Thus far I explain myself; further I go not. I stand here for myself; I put myself entirely into your hands; you will have the power of repaying treachery with death, and you may deal with me as you will with the more security, because friends I have none, and kins-

men I claim not, and of them I am unknown. My Lord, judge betwixt yourself and me.

"I come to you poor and solitary. You are noble, wealthy, and encircled by rich and powerful friends. What injury could I have the ability to offer you, even if the inclination were mine? Your name, your rank, is a protection and a safeguard to you; you have a shield on all sides; I am defenceless everywhere. Into your hands I commit myself: the sole boon I ask from you, is permission to serve you. If it be your intention to refuse it, suffer me to remonstrate. When I received, by means of your Steward, the mandate that hastened my voyage to England, why were not these objections to my reception amongst your household, then enumerated? Why was I not given to understand, that it was a contingence

in place of being allowed to look to it as a certainty? Was I then more open than now? Were my pretensions better supported? Did my recommendation proceed from a less exceptionable quarter? Or do I bear about me the mark of Cain, that I am shunned when I have scarcely yet appeared?"

Lewen paused. The Earl gazed on him with silent intenseness. His ears had drunk the musical periods of Lewen with an avidity that was not yet satiated. The contrast, a voice fluctuating to every gradation in the scale of harmony, presented to a countenance, the tranquillity of which appeared imperturbable, inspired the mind with an irresistible curiosity to penetrate a soul that could direct such an engine. "I am satisfied," said Lord Arding; "on your own terms I receive you. Reckon from this moment as the period of your admission;

I ask no farther recommendation than that you carry with you. Yourself shall be your own security."

"My Lord, I am overpowered; this is noble; this is what I anticipated without having had, perhaps, the right to calculate on it," replied Lewen, evidently affected. "And yet,"—he paused; a slight colour flushed his cheek; presently it disappeared, and he regained his former calmness. "I thank you, my Lord," he added: "if hereafter you shall have reason to repent this confidence, believe that my error has proceeded from judgment, not from a heart which would disdain to repay such confidence with treachery."

"Once for all, yet once again hear me, my Lord," said Russell earnestly. "This is specious, this is plausible—but no more. You have gained no information; you are as completely a stranger to the character, the principles, the con-

nexions of this young man, as formerly. In regard to the latter, he avows that a mystery *does* exist. 'Need I remind you, that such a mystery must involve the two former most essential points? As you regard your peace—as you regard your religion, my Lord, I call on you to be cautious!" The Earl waved his hand with an impatient motion. "My Lord," continued Russell, "I have done. Young man, I am not your enemy; I am the enemy of no human being; prove you what your profession indicates; assert the correctness of my Lord's judgment, confound mine, and I will thank you. In the mean time, let me warn you, that in me you will have always a scrutinizing observer of your actions. I shall watch you incessantly, but I shall do it with charity, and I shall interpret, I hope, with candour. Act, therefore, always with a certainty that your conduct will be com-

mented on. I am thus open with you, because I will not accept the advantage that surprise or incaution on your part, might afford me. I am not an invidious searcher out of faults; I am a cautious man, who desires to have the power of judging before he confides. You know me; I seek to know you. We are on terms of perfect equality. I am not rigid to others; for myself, it is by the grace of God, I am what I am! I repeat, that I am not your enemy; at present I stand in a relation towards you wholly negative. It will be for you to give our connexion its stamp, and its energy; and if you be *really* the character inclined to fidelity to the Earl of Arding, which you have declared yourself, you will not hereafter refuse me a less cordial esteem, on account of my hesitation at this moment."

Lewen replied only by that inexpres-

sive smile, which would have given a character of imbecility to any other countenance.

"To-day," said the Earl courteously, "we permit you to devote to the inspection of the castle. A stranger in the land of your birth, you will be anxious to obtain some insight into the manners and characters of its nobles; it will be no bad commencement to such a design to inspect the style of their places of residence. In the mean time, Mr. Russell, I crave your assistance to the expounding of a difficulty I have met with in Saint Paul; retire we, therefore, to meditation."

The Earl, with princely dignity, signed to Lewen and Shirley to withdraw. The gesture was obeyed, and they retreated, as if from a royal presence.

As soon as they had paced the anti-room, and entered the corridor, Lewen

paused: his eye was fixed on vacancy, and he appeared engaged in holding strict communion with himself.

"This works," thought the observant Shirley. "No doubt our new secretary is engaged in recalling what has passed during our interview with my Lord; in that case, he cannot fail to revert to the high consideration with which my Lord was pleased to declare he estimated my poor services. Aha! Master Lewen, this touches you! This opens the eyes of your understanding to the estimation with which it will befit you hereafter to regard me! This will dissipate all your unaccountable incomprehensibility of manner! This proves to you, that the Steward of a high and powerful noble is a more important personage, than, perhaps, you have hithero conceived! Undoubtedly, I shall now approach more nearly to your confidence; you will de-

sire to conciliate me; and, truly, I am not implacable!"

Lewen, at this point of the Steward's cogitations, bent his brow, and seemed to recover to the powers of positive existence.

"There is," said he, pacing the corridor by the side of Shirley, who involuntarily pursued his motions,—"there is something highly venerable in yonder old man. No sight is more touching than age borne with dignity. His candour, his openness are noble. There is a magnanimity about him inconceivably imposing. I never met with a character more interesting. The Earl too!—I congratulate you on having long served such a master. How princely in dignity! How gracious in condescension! And these men—— Alas! alas!"

Lewen paused; an expression of

acute distress amounting to agony, for an instant writhed his features. But it was momentary as the flash from the thunder cloud. "Hist! hist!" he said, with an air of listening, recovering his calmness;—"What is this? who approaches?"

A strain of music so sweetly wild, so tenderly melancholy, as the celestial harmony with which the dying saint may be supposed to be welcomed to brighter spheres, streamed around. Now the sound seemed to float above them; now it trembled in the air; now it swelled until the 'rapt listener breathed not in his ecstasy of attention; now it died away, scarcely touching the ear. Presently the measure changed to a loud and rapturous tone, elevating the spirits to buoyancy, and of power to raise despair to gladness. It seemed scarcely of this earth; it danced in the atmosphere, producing on the sense it

delighted the same effect, as the streaming wild-fire on the eye. Lewen's soul shone in his countenance. His colour flushed crimson; his eyes sparkled; he breathed softly and with difficulty; he paused involuntarily; and his whole manner amply testified that harmony had the power of exciting him to delirium.

"It is my Lady's Page; it is Philip Altham!" said the Steward, in no gentle voice, speaking whilst the melody still continued.—"Stop your ears, Master Lewen, for herein, according to my poor judgment, lies the secret of his great progress to my Lady's favour. Women are caught by any thing, as I have daily occasion to remark. The ear and the eye are the only recruits, a man who aspires to their whimsical preference, needs enlist in his favour. Having once secured these, the rest follows in course. This lad had but to

show his fair face, and to sing out a mass to my Lady, and presently he mounts to the topmost height of her partiality. Verily this is a sore scandal, and a crying sin; if my Lord now were of my humour, instead of receiving the boy's reverence with a gracious smile, or a condescending notice, he would speedily enrol him amongst the men at arms, or teach him to beat music out of two parchment skins."

Shirley was interrupted by the appearance of the object of his vituperations, who entered the corridor from a balcony, and glided to them with the airy grace of a sylph.

"So, Sir Page," thus the Steward addressed him—"So! In this manner you think it highly becoming and decent to waste the morning, and to get a good appetite for the undermeal, by violent exertion. Well, nothing is a better preservative against consumption,

than an excellent breathing of the lungs. You are right to take care of your bodily health, seeing that you are by much the most necessary personage on my Lady's establishment, whether we consider the number of your avocations or their importance. Let us see—in the morning—at sun-rise—I think thou, being a good Catholic, shouldst pray!"

"Even so, our worthy Steward, seeing I have no bodily infirmities by which I may parley excuse with my conscience," retorted the Page.

"It will be well that thou canst say so a few years hence," returned the Steward, rather discomposed. "It is to be hoped, that a great and a mighty change will be wrought in thee, or verily thy old age will be more useless and trivial than thy youth; if, indeed, such be possible. Even now, according to the Apostle, 'thou art an Idol-

lator;' for thou comest under the description of those who 'sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play.'"

"That thou sittest down to eat and drink often enough in all conscience, the Purveyor's accounts show pretty plainly," replied the undaunted Page. "It is true, that thou dost not rise up again to play; for, I fear, thy corpulency would bid defiance to any attempt, to which thy inclination might prompt thee. Abstinence, abstinence, Master Steward, would reduce thee within the compass of a moderate jerkin, and thou mightest contrive, perchance, to get rid of that shambling, heavy gait of thine, which gives notice of thy approach before thou has got within bow-shot distance. 'Rise up to play!' quoth he! No, by Saint Catherine! I would as soon expect to see an elephant tripping a galliard, or Mr. Russell performing mass, or my Lady eating flesh on a

Friday, or the Pope acknowledging the ecclesiastical supremacy of the King of England. *Thou* play? Why if thou wouldst submit to be drilled by me from Valentine to Swithin, and from Swithin to Valentine again, I would not engage to do more than improve thy gait a little; and to that undertaking I should be prompted by my own gratification; for it makes me mad to see thee roll thyself in front of the castle on a July day, thy face like the fiery-furnace of Babylon, thy forehead distilling large drops, moistening the thirsty earth around thee; and, if thou attemptest to speak, thy voice sinking to a gentle whisper, uttering only a lamentable '*Oh!*' or a pathetic '*Alas!*' Oh, as Lettice says, it is a sight to make Saint Swithin laugh; it is so monstrous an outrage against all grace and dignity!"

"Lettice is a saucy jade, and thou art an impudent varlet that deservest

chastisement !" said the Steward in great wrath, which evidently increased the glee of the laughing boy. "If it were not for my Lady's favour interposing between thee and a stout piece of hemp, who should let me from giving thee a taste of thy desert ?"

"When thou findest *hay* as *gross* as *hemp*, or my dagger swollen to the circumference of that huge mass of flesh with which thou affrontest the eyes of thy neighbours, and which thou wouldst impose on them for a human body, thou froward old man, then this untouched form of mine, shall submit itself to thy stripes," returned the Page, a bright colour flushing his cheek, and a laugh bursting from his lips, that bounded to the heart, infusing its own delicious gladness. "Go to ; thou art testy ; thou art wayward. Thy humour becomes intolerable, and youth and woman will flee before it, as flowers and fruits before

the blasts of winter. Oh, if thou wilt be endured, fast, fast, until this spleen shall leave thee! Fast until thou shalt have reduced thyself to such moderate circumference, that the doublet of my Lord's heretic Chaplain may encase thee. Fast until thou shalt have softened thy rubicundity of visage. Fast so, that in our Christmas revels, if death does not gripe thee beforehand, thou mayst trip it away with one of the damsels, without alarming thy associates with terror, lest the ground burst under thee. And, above all, I charge thee, be cheerful, but not over gay; in all things be moderate, in nothing splenetic. Thus, thou wilt have a chance of rivalling me in the favour of the girls (with whom thou knowest I am a petted lamb), a consummation which I am sure thou longest after; and if thou be thoroughly amended, thou wilt remember who prescribed for thee,

and present some token of thy gratitude to thy physician."

"Oh, thou saucy Page! Thou impudent sinner against all outward decencies! thou contemner of thy superiors! Thou derider of authority! Thou contumelious insulter of honourable age!" ejaculated the enraged Steward. "Thou wast born no one knows where; thou comest no one knows whence; thou goest no one knows whither, albeit one may shrewdly guess. How durst thou presume to intercept me here, in my retreat from my Lord's apartments, withal seeing that I was not alone?"

"Verily, that is even the cause to which thou art indebted for the honour I do thee by parleying with thee," replied the Page, whose amusement appeared to increase every moment. "If thou hadst been alone, thou mightest have walked here, or wheresoever thou wouldst, secure from any in-

trusion of mine, who cannot answer it to my conscience, often to interrupt thy learned and profound meditations. It is to thy companion I come. Thy *voluntary* companion I am sure he is not; I come, therefore, to release him from the heavy penalty of thy society."

"That must, indeed, be excellently good which thy recommendation will procure for him," replied the Steward, superciliously. "Away with thee! We have better occupation than to throw away time thus idly on so worthless a varlet as thou."

"Sir Stranger," said the Page, crossing from Shirley, opposite to whom he had hitherto stood, and approaching immediately to Lewen, "I am desired by my Lady, the Countess of Arding, to bring you to her presence forthwith."

"Master Lewen, as my Lord's Secretary, belongs entirely to the Protest-

ant part of this household," said Shirley hastily.

"Even so," returned the Page; "my Lady has no desire to despoil my Lord of his new domestic; but she chooses to see him, and her wishes are not to be controlled by such an one as *thou!*"

"If it is to be even thus, I myself also will attend on the countess's pleasure," said Shirley.

"I shall by no means offer any objection to that," replied the Page, with a laugh that partook at once of archness and malice; "for the present, I imagine her pleasure will detain thee here. Thou art not often to be found in her apartments, which originates, I suppose, in her preference of thy absence. Thou mayest occupy thy leisure even as thou wilt. The Secretary accompanies me whither thou dost not.

I will not charge myself with the responsibility of thy proper conduct in my Lady's presence. Betake thyself, therefore, to what occupation likes thee. Master Lewen, this way opens to your steps," and in speaking this latter sentence, the Page moved onwards with a theatrical but graceful gesture, whimsically securing Lewen, by passing his own arm through the Secretary's.

"I wish you joy of your patron," said the Page, with an air of supreme contempt, as soon as they were entirely beyond the Steward's hearing. "'Tis a very rational animal that can walk on two feet, and prefers not to crawl on hands and knees. If sack and capon are good at clarifying the brains, feed richly and act most wisely; thou wilt have plenty of both, if thou art exalted into being the boon companion of my Lord's Steward. Hang the dotard! I have kept my Lady in attendance,

whilst I was playing the fool quibbling with him; a fault so much the greater, because I can procure for myself the amusement of laughing at his petulance whenever the humour to do so is on me."

By this time they had passed through the anti-room. They paused before a door, composed half of glass, shaded by a silk curtain, at which the Page gave three distinct raps. The curtain was visibly agitated on the other side; but those requiring admission, had no advantage of glancing into the interior apartment. After an interval of a very few minutes, the Page touched the lock, and they entered.

Even on the threshold Lewen paused and breathed violently and with difficulty. He heard his name pronounced softly by the Page. He was roused by the sound, and walked up the apartment with a hurried and irregular step.

The light was very dim, entering through windows sunk in deep niches. The walls were of a dead stone colour, covered with portraits of saints and martyrs, some of which the travelled eye of Lewen recognized as the works of those masters who, had effected that resuscitation of arts in Italy, which was perfected about this period. Immediately under a very noble painting of Mary Magdalene sat the Countess of Arding. Even in that posture, her commanding height was perceptible, and the almost masculine majesty of her figure was very distinct. She was clothed in the strictest garb of monastic seclusion; its colour was grey, except the lawn stole that covered her shoulders. A long white religious veil shaded her head, but was, at this instant, removed from her face. No habiliments could be better adapted to give an air of austere simplicity to the whole person; but

the figure which they now garbed, would not admit simplicity: they rather added to the grandeur of it, by directing the eye entirely to the exact proportions of its outline, and to the stern severity of its air. The combination impressed on the mind of the beholder, a conviction of the struggle between natural pride and conscientious humiliation—a rebellion of the heart against the penance endured by superstition. The features of the countenance were strongly marked, and singularly handsome; its expression that of subdued but not conquered haughtiness. The fire of the piercing black eye could not have been more vivid in youth and happiness; but it was frequently softened by the drooping of the full lids, which were cast down as if to veil from the view of others that splendor, which penitence could not fade. A hectic colour glowed on the

oval cheek, the vestige of former healthful bloom, which appeared now rather to stain than enliven. The contour of the form was destroyed, but the largeness of its proportions rendered its attenuation imperceptible. Lewen thought that she might have personified an empire in ruins, fallen indeed, but its ashes stamped every where with those edifices which revealed its former glory, and secured its future remembrance.

The eye of the Countess paused on Lewen. She crossed her arms on her bosom, and inclined her head. There was meekness in the attitude—in the whole action.

Not a voice—not a sound—broke the deep silence. Lewen was oppressed by it. If Shirley had been present, he would have perceived, that that calmness, which to him had appeared invincible, was displaced by an intense expression of agony, that con-

vulsed every feature. A cold damp overspread the marble of that forehead; the lightning of those singular eyes was veiled in a deep mist; the contraction of those pliant brows evinced a bitterness of feeling, amounting to torture; his lips quivered; his frame shook; whilst a tenderness shone over the whole, exquisite even to painfulness. His glance met that of the Countess, and he withdrew it, with a convulsive effort, as if the iron had entered his soul.

By the side of the Countess—dividing his observation between her and the Secretary—stood the Confessor, Father Valerius.

When Lewen's attention was diverted from the object of his original contemplation, it fixed on the Confessor; his eye encountered the glance of Valerius, and was as speedily withdrawn. By a strong effort he subdued

his emotion; every trait of his calmness returned; he regained his tranquillity. Then he sought again the eye of the Confessor; he threw his own over his whole person; he paused on every lineament, daring the observation of Valerius, with an air of indifference or defiance.

The almost gigantic stature of the Father was rendered more conspicuous by his erect bearing, and by the spareness of his form. His hair, according to the rules of his church, was closely shaven, exhibiting the singular shape of his head, broad and flat on the front, gradually narrowing downwards; the few locks permitted to grow were very light, and no grey was mingled with them. His features were lean and acute; his visage long and meagre. His eyes were of a very pale blue, insipid in colour, but bright and shining. At this point description fails. The

intenseness of expression that pervaded those eyes—that countenance—was indescribable. It was brilliant—it was intellectual—it was indicative of genius, of consummate talent, of undaunted energy. It was all this—it was more. It stamped the character of the man; it was the blazon of his actions; but it was never understood, until himself was comprehended; and then it appeared so capable of interpretation, that they who had at first wondered at its incapability of definition, were amazed at their own shallowness in not having immediately penetrated it.

Lewen had ample leisure for observation. That silence which had succeeded his entrance, still remained unbroken. Willing to relieve it, he turned towards the Page, who stood nearly opposite to him; and in gazing on that boy's countenance, he felt as if restored to fellowship with his species,

after his mind had been stretched to its utmost tension, by converse with those of another and an unknown sphere.

The downcast eye of the Page—his bent and pallid brow—his arms meekly folded across his breast—were, in the view of Lewen, so many distinct proofs of the boy's proficiency in hypocrisy. The sportiveness—the buoyancy—and the brilliant colouring of youth appeared to be fled together. His blue eyes no longer danced with joy, but swam slowly and gently in the brilliant fluid that formed their atmosphere. Now, for the first time, the Secretary was struck with the exquisite beauty of the Page's countenance. The transparent delicacy of his complexion caused a sigh, that its charm must disappear with his youth. His fair open forehead, clear as Parian marble, except from the tender stain of the blue veins which wandered over his temples,

was exhibited between the parted locks of his pale, shining brown hair, that, towards the ends of the crisp curls, was more "orient of colour." His narrow pencilled brows arched nobly but delicately, distinctly separated. His nose was Grecian in its descent from the forehead, inclining downwards to aquiline. His small feminine mouth was of a pale rose-colour, somewhat deeper than the pink of his cheeks. His neck and throat, shaded by a rich lace ruff, were white, soft, and delicately formed as the most consummate female loveliness ever showed. As his former vivacity had been wild, so his present pensiveness was gentle. Nothing could be more touching than his silence, and he, who gazed on him, feared to see the illusion of that perfect beauty escape by some inappropriate speech, or by an inharmonious voice. Lewen could scarcely recognise the identity of

the frolicksome boy who had quibbled with a testy Steward, and the beautiful youth who stood there, the type of sorrow in its loveliest appearance. The boy met his eye; his own sunk beneath Lewen's glance rebuked; and his colour deepened from some internal emotion which the Secretary penetrated not.

His examination of the Page—although it had, for a short period, diverted him from the oppressive embarrassment of this singular silence—terminated, and had not relieved that silence. Still the Countess sat in mute dignity, alternately scrutinizing him who came there but at her mandate, and dropping her eye-lids: still the Confessor stood erect, his arms folded in his scapulary over his bosom, his flashing glances beaming directly on the Secretary. No mention was made of the purpose for which Lewen had been summoned there; it seemed to him that he came

to afford a spectacle; he was externally patient under the sternness of their scrutiny, but he writhed within.

The Page timidly moved towards the Countess—"So. please you, my Lady," said he, "the Secretary is but just dismissed from my Lord's presence, who consigned him to the care of the Seneschal. If you will honour him, therefore, with your commands, I will conduct him hence, that he may have leisure to meditate on his avocations."——Lewen's heart thanked the boy for such a mediation.

The Lady replied not immediately. She drew her brows over her eyes, and fixed them steadily on the ground. Then she passed her fingers slowly over the beads of her rosary, and her lips moved.

The rosary presently fell again by her side, She paused musingly, then arose.

"Father!" she pronounced, clasping her hands and raising her eyes appealingly to the Monk. "Father!" she repeated.

The very soul of Lewen trembled as he listened to that voice, the pathos of which was the more touching, because it seemed naturally tuned to a haughtier cadence.

"What would my daughter?" said the Confessor, in a tone so soft, melodious, and soothing, that it appeared scarcely consonant to such a form.

Again the soul of Lewen shrunk, but it was with a feeling widely different from his former one. It was a sentiment of awe, such as the mind might feel if listening to that voice, which had the power to unrol its future destinies.

"Father!" again repeated the Countess, with a deep intonation; "even *now* approacheth the time?"

"Even now!" solemnly acquiesced Valerius.

"And the expiation will have been completed!" persisted the Countess.

"Calm thy troubled spirit, unhappy daughter!" returned the Confessor, in the same soothing accents as at first. "Have I not promised, and will I not perform?—Thou shalt have satisfaction in the issue."

The Countess paused, her cheek flushed; she turned her radiant eye on Lewen.

"Stranger, come hither!" she said, addressing him.

Lewen obeyed; again he lost his calmness. His self-command was not often vincible; but now his step faltered; his emotions paid that tribute to woman's unhappiness, which they refused to the most exalted intellect and rank of man.

"You are come to serve my hus-

band!" said the Countess, gazing earnestly on him. "Serve him well! This realm will not afford you a nobler master."

"The head of your own Catholic house, perhaps!" said Valerius, with a monitory air.

"Well remembered!' said the Countess, her eye flashing more haughtily, "we thank you, Father, that you permit us never to forget the heretic principles of our Lord. Young man, thou canst not serve a nobler master!"

Lewen bowed, as much to avoid the direct glance of the Lady of Arding, as to evince his respectful acquiescence.

The Countess again paused, bending her searching eye full on him.

"Father, observe well this youth.". The confessor obeyed, and Lewen bore their united inspection more easily than the single gaze of the Lady. She paused. "A form like this," she con-

tinued, "has appeared in my visions of the night, but more divine, for it has bloomed as if celestial ichor tinged its veins. It came to me mingled with the dawnings of eternity; but the rest was shapeless—that only, distinct. I have never lost sight of it; and now that it stands before me, it seems to me that I dream again. Father, I would not awake!" She paused, and her cheek lost its flushed crimson. "Tell me, Father, how is it, that the presence of a stranger—his person unknown,—of no affinity—can thus infuse gladness amounting to extacy in a heart, that has long defied all the caresses of joy or happiness?" The Lady paused; her cheek and lips became entirely colourless; she was fainting. Lewen approached as if borne on wings; he kneeled at her feet, he supported her with his arms: as she bent to avail herself of his support, she almost em-

braced him. His heart trembled; a deadly sickness oppressed him; he required the assistance he so passionately afforded. A heavy sigh relieved him, and the Lady of Arding recovering, released herself. He retreated to his former position, but his cheek was flushed, and his eye downcast.

"Father!" said the Countess, but in a voice more indistinct than before; "tell me, what new sensation overcomes me thus? Why did bliss produce an effect so much resembling death? Why am I thus happy in his presence? Why feel I as if the measure of felicity were already full? Why do I appear to possess that happiness after which my soul has so panted?"

"Is there not abundant cause?" replied the Confessor, in a low, energetic tone. "Do you not receive in this Stranger, security that the object of your existence will be accomplished,—

that all your cares will find termination, —that your future happiness will surpass your past misery? Remembering this, daughter, will you still wonder if joy dawns over your soul?"

"You have spoken well, Father," replied the Countess with an air of hesitating submission. "It must be thus! and yet"—she paused; again she glanced steadily on Lewen; "Father, I will no more lose the sight of that countenance; I will stamp it on my heart—on my brain; I will thus be able to trace any resemblance to it; perchance, my fancy will present it to me in the visions of the night more forcibly, and may elucidate to me those strange and affecting emotions which overwhelm me: my memory shall never more be free from the traces I will impress on it. Oh, Father, if this youth's remote connexion with the object of my prayers and my penance be indeed, as you affirm, the

cause which awakens emotions so new and endearing; when I possess that object, my felicity will be equal to that of saints and angels!"

"You will still find enough of bitter in your cup, to remind you of mortality and the pain of a pilgrimage on earth," replied the Confessor, with a slight severity. "Can the wife of an heretic husband—can the mother of an heretic daughter, boast herself supremely happy?"

"Father, Father, you bow me to the dust! You wring my soul with deep penitence for that I have believed myself blessed, even for one poor minute's space!" said the Countess, in a voice of piercing woe. "When I gain a glimpse of the beatitude of Heaven; when I seem to hold converse with the bright forms of its inhabitants; you tear open the sepulchre, and display to me the ashes, the mangled bones, it enshrouds.

Father, is it sinful that my brain shall, for a moment, lose the traces of the brands that have burnt it, that my heart shall forget its desolation? You speak to me that never had a child!"

"Better never to know a parent's joys, than to prove a parent's bitter pangs for the perdition of her offspring!" said the Confessor earnestly. "The poor heretic girl, who will shortly arrive, will not bring much happiness to the breast of her Christian Mother!"

"Father, have I not resigned my daughter to you?" said the Countess with energy; "yes, and I *will* resign her," she added with haughty firmness.

At this allusion to the Lady Blanche Evelyn, the cheek of Lewen lost every tint of its natural paleness, and glowed with a bright crimson. His eye shone with tender brilliancy, more beautiful than its usual luminousness. His mouth

was curved by a smile no longer inexpressive, but radiant and splendid as pleasing emotions could make it.

The eye of the Page had never wandered from the face of Lewen. He had marked all the variations of his countenance, its powerful agitation, its recovered tranquillity, and he had remarked them with calmness until this moment. But when the hectic crossed the cheek of Lewen, that of the Page became white as monumental alabaster. He started, he inclined forwards, as if in strained attention—as if desirous of believing, that he suffered from some delusion. His eyes swam in tears, his now livid lips were parted, and their dewy moisture was parched. He breathed with effort, and he covered his face with his hands.

The Confessor, meanwhile, had whispered to the Countess, and had drawn an assent from her some measure

of which Lewen felt himself the object, by the frequent direction of the eye and gesture of Valerius towards him.

The Countess signed to retire, but she did it with evident reluctance, still gazing on Lewen. "Stranger, farewell!" she said to him, in the moment of disappearing through the folding doors at the upper end of the apartment. "Serve well my Lord; you cannot have a nobler master."

Lewen, for an instant, gazed on the spot where she had last stood, absorbed in profound reverie—lost to every object around.

"Your way now lies with me," said the Confessor, interrupting Lewen's cogitations, and opening a side door. "Our interview will not be a long one; Philip Altham, pace the corridor, and keep off all intruders, until I commit my Lord's Secretary to your care again."

The Page hastened to obey, and traversed the gallery with steps less measured than the usual ones of a sentinel; yet the pace of that Page was heavy, as compared to his usual lightness: and grave, as contrasted with his ordinary gaiety. His cheek had not regained its colour, and his eyes were yet suffused with tears. "I am strangely melancholy to-day!" thus he soliloquized; then looking at the sun-beams shining through the windows, he continued, "perhaps, the weather makes me somewhat heavier than usual. I would not that the Steward should find me in this trim; 'twould be a pleasant sight to him! Well, when my Lady Blanche Evelyn returns to the castle, no doubt this Lewen, this new Secretary of my Lord's, will rise rapidly in her favour. And what have I to do with my Lady Blanche, or with Lewen, or indeed with the world?" he added, the tears rolling over his fair

cheeks as he threw himself half on the ground, leaning against the wall.

At this moment, the Steward, whose impatience at Lewen's lengthened absence was irrepressible, entered the corridor, and stood immediately opposite to the prostrate boy.

"Ah, Sir Page!" he exclaimed. "So! having, at length, shown my Lady some specimen of thy assurance and insolence, she has given thee thy deserts by ordering thee from her presence."

"If I were to give thee thy deserts, thou doting old man," retorted the indignant Page, rising with a bound, "I should immediately drive thee from mine. Thou art largely indebted to thine age for my forbearance; and to thy grey locks, which save thy head from many a shake my fingers long to give it."

"Thou art but a petulant child, and knowest not what thou owest to thy su-

periors," replied the Steward, with affected calmness, but in deep wrath. "I warrant, my Lady has been teaching thee deference, and thou dost not relish thy mortification. Well, well, I (albeit I think it would work for thy good) can pity thy punishment, which no doubt thou deservest."

"Master Steward, thou liest doubly," retorted the Page, regaining his usual impertinent vivacity; "First thou liest, because thou sayest thou pitiest me, when thou knowest in thine heart, thou wouldst rejoice in my dismissal hence. Secondly, thou liest, in affirming that I deserve punishment. Nay thou hast lied thrice, for once thou hast lied by implication. I am here not for punishment, but security. I am charged to keep my Lady's apartment secure from all such intruders as thou," he added, posting himself immediately against the door.

"Respect in me thy Lord's chief domestic," stormed the angry Shirley; "nay, in thy Lord's absence, respect in me his representative."

The Page scanned the Steward, glancing over his whole person, with an air of supreme contempt and derision: "*Thou* my Lord's representative!" he said. "Why, truly, in the matter of size, thou art large enough, in all conscience, to represent not only my Lord, but my Lady also; verily, thou art an apt emblem of the London body corporate!"

"And for thee, why thou wilt be in thy very noon of life, but a man in miniature!" retorted the Steward. "I will not, however, waste time, which is precious, in idly quibbling with thee; what hast thou done with my Lord's Secretary?"

The Steward was spared a reply more than usually galling, as the ineffable dis-

dain which curled the lip of the Page indicated, by the appearance of Lewen and Father Valerius.

The brow of the Confessor lowered for an instant as he gazed on Shirley. "Then I infer," he said, addressing Lewen, as if continuing their conversation, "that, although recommended hither by so pious a Catholic as Archibald Shirley, your religious principles are immutably fixed?"

"Immutably!" repeated Lewen, obeying the signal of Shirley by retreating with him.

Valerius watched their departure. When the echo of their footsteps was no longer audible, he turned to the Page.

"What thinkest thou of this young man?" he asked.

"Oh, my Father!" replied the boy; "if *he* were such an one!"

"Mark me;" returned Valerius; "be

thy silence that of the grave; thy secrecy, that of the night; thy calmness, that of the dead. *This is he!*"

The Page turned very pale, and, for an instant, his breathing ceased! then he sighed convulsively; passed his hand over his forehead; withdrew it; and all was calm. "I shall feel thus no more, oh, my Father!" he said softly. "See how well I can bear it!"

The Confessor put his hand on the heart of the Page. "Why throbs it thus?" said Valerius; "and why is it so disquieted? Foolish child! Is not the vista opening to us, bright as Heaven! Go to! Be calm, and deserve thy fate! Let thy soul govern thy fortune, not thy fortune thee! Remember; *this is he!*"

"*This is he?*" sighed the Page. They separated.

CHAPTER III.

" Nobly he yokes
A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at." *Shakspeare.*

" He's young and tender,
And fit for that impression your affections
Shall stamp upon him. Age brings on discretion;
A year hence, these mad toys that now possess him,
Will show like bugbears to him, shapes to fright him." *Beaumont.*

IT would be useless to trace, step by step, the progress which Lewen made in the favour of the Earl of Arding. In addition to the abstruse learning which distinguished that age, he possessed an abundance of information

which was of daily use, and of that nature which seemed gathered rather from the study of men than of books. The Earl was the better able to appreciate its value, because it was continually displayed for his advantage ; and not drawing a subtile moral distinction between admiration of extraordinary acquirements, and esteem of the man, he regarded his Secretary as honourable because he was learned ; he considered him of approved integrity, because he knew him possessed of profound erudition.

In the mean time Mark Russell suffered no indications of extraordinary intellectual powers to warp that judgment which was occupied in arriving at a decision on the real character of the man. His observation of Lewen was incessant and intense, but it was also open. He employed no spies to bring to him information of the Secretary's

pursuits during those periods of unavoidable separation which continually occurred; he satisfied himself with personal scrutiny, which, if it had not already terminated satisfactorily for Lewen, at least had produced no impression more decidedly unfavourable to him.

After his singular introductory interview with Lady Arding and the Confessor, Lewen was not again summoned to their presence. Neither could Shirley, with all his shrewdness, discover that they engrossed any portion of his thoughts. He never alluded to either, and when they were mentioned by others, he listened with indifference amounting to apathy: and Shirley had not advanced farther towards comprehending the Secretary. There was precisely the same distance between them, as at first; and all the Steward's

attempts at familiarity were rendered nugatory by the calm superiority of Lewen's manner.

But now the busy notes of preparation for some event beyond the ordinary routine of daily life, sounded through the castle. A more than usual spirit of activity animated the domestics. The Countess's ladies were to be seen frequently pacing the galleries, with faces gayer than common, and steps more alert. There was an elastic cheerfulness in all around, very different from the sombre tranquillity that generally pervaded the whole establishment. The manner too of the Earl of Arding was agitated. The placidity of his expression was frequently changed for the anxiety of expectation. Lewen remarked all these various symptoms, but he did not comment on them. Shirley wondered at his forbearance. He expected

some inquiry from him, and he knew how much more highly *solicited* communications were appreciated, than voluntary. But Lewen made none; and Shirley had no resource from the pain of silence, but to enlighten him without awaiting entreaty.

"This is a fine plant, Master Lewen," said the Steward, entering the Secretary's apartment with a rare exotic; "you will not often have seen a finer abroad."

"It is fine," acquiesced Lewen, examining it, and recollecting a description of it in Pliny the Elder.

"I am glad you pronounce it so," replied the Steward; "I design it for one to whom I would give the sweetest and the brightest flower of the earth."

Lewen did not make the anticipated inquiry.

The laughing voices of the damsels

as they passed by the door, suggested to Shirley another ground of attack on the curiosity of the Secretary.

"The perpetual giggling of these light-heeled lasses would be insufferable on any other occasion," observed he; "but, at present, anger would seem rather out of season; neither, I suspect, would it avail much."

Lewen replied not; but he looked as if some information must necessarily be appendant to this observation.

"After so long an absence," resumed Shirley, affecting an air of indifference, the better to veil the satisfaction he felt in imparting information, the importance of which he estimated by the degree of interest it inspired in himself,—"after so long an absence, the expectation of the arrival of the Lady Blanche Evelyn at the castle of her noble father, naturally occasions much bustle and expectation."

At the mention of the name of the Lady Blanche, Lewen's cheek again glowed. He was visibly agitated, which Shirley observed with no small delight, believing it originated in the anticipation of meeting so young a female, who possessed present rank so elevated, and future pretensions so exalted.

"For myself," resumed the Steward, throwing his head back with an inimitable action of self-complacency, "I am extremely anxious to see my Lady Blanche now she has arrived at womanhood, not only as the undoubted heiress of Arding, in which relation she appears nevertheless very important to my view; but inasmuch as I have frequently dandled her in my arms in her infantile days, and have had the honour of acting guardian to her person, whilst my Lord was suffering such terrible anxiety, lest she should disappear after the young gentleman, whom God help,

if he has fallen into the hands of the wicked!"

Lewen had been absorbed in reflection whilst the garrulous Steward had spoken. He now shook it off by a strong effort.

"The Lady Blanche then returns speedily?" inquired Lewen, with an air of deep thought.

"Even on the morrow," replied Shirley, seating himself, delighted with the impression he had made;—"even on the morrow my Lady Blanche returns to these halls, which will one day be her own. Heaven delay the moment! My wish, Master Lewen, proceeds not from any disrespect to my Lady Blanche, but from affection to my Lord, her father."

"Is her arrival somewhat sudden?" demanded Lewen, rather to conceal the extent of his feelings, than to ascertain an interesting point.

"You may remember, I told you on the evening of your arrival here, that my Lady Blanche was expected," replied Shirley.—"His Grace, the Duke of Suffolk, carries his family to London, when the greater part of them are to be mated. My Lady Jane Grey, who has been the principal companion and friend of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, is about to become the wife of Lord Guildford Dudley, the fourth son of the Duke of Northumberland, a nobleman of whom it becometh not me to speak, seeing that he may be better than report makes him. Lady Blanche, desirous to witness the nuptials of her friend, which will be mightily splendid, seeing that those of her two sisters, the Ladies Katherine and Mary, will take place at the same time, has obtained permission of the Earl to do so, and comes here only on a visit of a month or so, after which she will go immediately to Lon-

don, to my Lord, the Duke of Suffolk's. Methinks, considering the severe illness of his Highness, good King Edward, my Lord of Northumberland, who is always about his Majesty's person, should not have seized this time for festival and rejoicing. However, a prudent man speaks little of his thoughts, an opinion with which I am sure you will agree, Master Lewen."

"Until now, then, Lady Blanche Evelyn, has been secluded in the shades of Broadgate Park," said Lewen.

"Even so," replied Shirley,—"and dull enough her residence there was, if one may believe the tales abroad, seeing that my Lord, the Duke, is an austere man in his family. But Lady Blanche being a great lover of learning, and excited to it by the example of the Lady Jane Grey, might find more happiness there than would have been the case if she had preferred dancings and jun-

kettings to which the taste of women pretty generally leads them." . . .

"The Earl is indeed satisfied with a very small portion of his daughter's society, since, after an absence of years, he consents to receive a visit of a month!" said Lewen.

"Why, as to the matter of her absence," replied the Steward,—"it was altogether his own fault. And after having desired my Lady Blanche's residence elsewhere for so long a time; moreover, at a place where, as I said before, she had more lectures than entertainments; it would be hard to separate her from her friends and companions just now at the season when their gaiety begins."

"With what feelings will the Countess receive her?" exclaimed Lewen, with an air of forgetfulness.

"As to the Countess," returned Shirley, with a look of importance;—

"between ourselves, Master Lewen, I am very much inclined to think, that, by the blessing of Father Valerius' instructions, she would rather say a Mass for the repose of her daughter's soul, than receive her here as the heretic heir to my Lord's honours. Poor young Lady! for her sake, I almost wish the next month were over. She will have but little repose from the persecutions of my Lady and her Confessor. I hope my Lord will have the consideration to keep her as much to himself and Mr. Russell as may be. For my Lady, the Countess, I think her soul is divided between her holy relics, Father Valerius, and her petulant Page, whom, I pray Heaven, that my Lord may speedily remove hence!"

Lewen did not reply; he was evidently absorbed in profound reverie. Shirley perceiving that all desire of winning farther attention from him

was hopeless, took up the plant, by the assistance of which he had introduced himself, and departed.

Lewen sat, for a few minutes, with his arms folded, and his head inclined on his bosom. Then he paced the apartment musingly. Very often his pliant brows were contracted even to conjunction. His whole countenance was restless and agitated. His cheek glowed with a flushed crimson, or was overspread with a livid paleness. Sometimes a deep sigh burst from him, which convulsed his whole frame; then presently a bitter smile curled his lips, a smile of derision indescribably keen. It was evident, that he was under the dominion of very powerful emotion.

He quitted his apartment, and sauntered into the open air. The wind blew gently on his uncovered head, passing over his throbbing

temples with grateful coolness. The moon was at its full, and in the very zenith of the Heavens. Lewen paced in the light of its cold beams, which, shining on his pale complexion, rendered it yet more colourless. But neither the bright moon, nor the sparkling Heaven, nor the gentle wind, softened the melancholy of his musings. Some chord of his heart had been touched, whose vibration shook him to agony. Perhaps, in the lapse of his life, this was the moment of most acute sensation.

A voice very soft and low streamed on the air, chaunting the vesper hymn to the Virgin. It was a soothing relief to the agitation of Lewen. He lingered —he listened. The tones were sweet, full, and delicious; clear, though scarcely rising above a murmur. It was a melody suited to that dreamy light. It was consonant to every

idea, which the 'rapt fancy might form of the spiritual citizens of that luminary, which ruled the hour. The agitation of Lewen was ameliorated. The songster had touched him in his most vulnerable point. His brow expanded, and his countenance regained its placidity.

The melody ceased. A gentle footstep approached. Lewen paused; he saw only the youthful Page, who crossed his hands on his bosom, bowed his head, and uttered a meek *benedicite* as he passed.

Lewen gazed after his graceful form, as it moved onwards, softened by the shadowy moonlight. The various aspects in which that Page had appeared to him, rushed over his memory. He delayed a moment, then pursued the boy.

When Philip Altham heard the quick step of Lewen, he turned round, and

immediately paused. Lewen contemplated him as he stood there, with exquisite emotions of delight and admiration. His cheeks glowed brightly through the artificial paleness which the moonbeam cast over him. His eyes glittered with splendid lustre. He looked fairer than any creature of the earth, and the soul of Lewen softened with delicious tenderness as he gazed on such incomparable beauty.

"The night, fair Sir, is alluring," said Lewen, as he joined the Page; "yet is the hour scarcely suited to spirits so gay as thine. It is the season for the melancholy and the sad; it soothes the spleen of those whom the world has sickened, or whom the persecutions of an unhappy destiny have wearied of existence. But thou, with all the dew and the fragrance of the morning of life still on thee, thy bloom unfaded by any touch of sorrow, thy spirit soaring to the

eyrie of hope and promised bliss, the future opening to thee with elysian splendor, thy very inexperience affording to thy imagination a perpetual Paradise of sweets, methinks thou shouldst revel with the lark, and sing before heaven's gate of light with the bird of morn! The blithe laugh of joy would grate most discordantly on the pensive dimness of this hour; in truth, fair Page, thou art of a spirit better suited to the splendor of noon-day, than to the melancholy of a season like this!"

The head of the Page dropped on his bosom. When he raised it, he turned towards his companion, and an expression of gentle reproach mingled with the pensiveness of his air.

Presently the boy's countenance changed; it was irradiated with keen contempt, not unmixed with derision.

"I do not much value thy skill in books, if it has not sharpened thy pe-

netration in thy own deceptive race, if it has not taught thee the fallacy of appearance," said he, and the clear ring of his voice was audible in its full sound of harmony. "Dost thou form thy judgment of me, because with yonder doting Steward I parry presumptuous authority by reciprocal insolence, and distance impertinence by raillery? Who would quail where submission would produce only contempt, and augment the arrogance of imbecile pretensions? When has my spirit soared to the eyrie of hope and happiness? Alas!" he continued, his voice softening to the most touching cadence; "since I lost the happy unconsciousness of infancy, what hour of my life can I recall with joy, what moment would I choose to live again? Since I felt that I entered the arena of life to play no trifling part, what have I obtained that should elevate me to cheerfulness? Nought but

the pride of a soul not to be daunted? And since I awoke to a feeling of the passions, what has been my life? I have worn a mask—I have been impenetrable to scrutiny—I have defied observation—I have disregarded opinion—and I have deserved all, for I have dared all!"

"The passions!" repeated Lewen, surprised at the singular sentiments so rapidly poured forth by the youthful page; "at thy age the very existence of the passions should be unknown."

"*Should!*" replied the boy keenly; "aye, Sir, but we of this world know not *should!* We are the creatures of circumstance, not the vassals of duty. Neither do the passions depend on our will. Can we decide on the period of their bursting the shell in which infancy envelopes them? Can we control them in their existence? Can we command their delay? *Control the passions!*"

he continued, curling his mouth in derision, and ineffable bitterness of scorn. "Bring down yonder moon from its sphere and make a football of it, or plunge, into the luminous sun, and deny the existence of heat!"

"Thy sentiments are in such extreme discordance with thy youth, they awaken infinite amazement," said Lewen, gravely. "Thy theory teems with error, and I should tremble for its consequences, if thy boyhood did not afford *assurance* that thou wilt not at present act on it; and *hope* that future convictions will annihilate thy young opinions. Albeit there is danger in suffering thy imagination thus to overleap all bounds of reason and probability."

"Prove to me that it exceeds the truth, that it assigns to the passions a power greater than the experience of ages declares them to possess!" re-

turned the Page, his eye and cheek kindling as he spoke. "Thou hast drunk at the storied fount of time; what hast thou found there? Worlds lost and won at the instance of the passions! Man rising into a god, nerved by these alone! *Ambition* standing unmoved whilst universal conflagration devastates the earth, slaking its thirst in blood! *Pride* exulting over the fetters of its fellows! *Lust of dominion* breaking the necks of its victims by the heaviness of the yoke it imposes! Anger, revenge, grief, despair—what do they exhibit to us! A friend murdered by royalty even in the festival hour, because he dared to utter truth! A country sacrificed to private wrongs! The hand pointing the weapon at the breast of its owner, because hope was not! And *love* too"—his voice trembled, but he continued with energy—" aye, *love*, stronger than all; presenting

to us a city in flames at the voice of a woman—an Antony subdued, and a Cæsar triumphant by the caprice of a woman! Oh, talk not of controlling those mighty masters of the mind, when such are their effects on us!"

"Thou art altogether a mystery, young Page," replied Lewen, smiling seriously; "thy sentiments astonish me as much by the copiousness of thy allusions, indicating more knowledge than I had imagined fell to thy share, as by the fatal influence they have obtained over thy mind. Thou art engrossed entirely by the memory of the madness of our nature, when thou shouldst rather contemplate the piety, the self-command, the holy firmness, the patience, of which it is capable. Instead of dwelling on the maniacs, whom our blindness has pronounced heroes, recollect the holy saints, whom our admiration has canonised! *Then*

thou wilt comprehend how much man may subdue his passions, which thou hast pronounced invincible."

"Why, thou art an anchoret! duller than my Lady, and graver than her Confessor!" returned the Page, with a petulant smile. "I would not become thy disciple; no, not for my Lord's coronet! Sooth to say, much as the passions may disturb and distract, their very agitation is delicious." He paused. "Tell me sincerely," he said abruptly, gazing on Lewen with a look of intense scrutiny, and slackening his pace almost to a pause; "tell me, in very openness, hast thou really lived to thy years, without any touch of love?"

"I have nought to do with worldly feelings; my vocation lieth elsewhere," said Lewen sternly.

The Page hung down his head, rebuked. Lewen's eyes were bent on the ground, or he would have perceived

the trembling lip of the boy, his pale cheek, his swimming eye. They walked on in silence—Lewen in deep and stern musing, regardless of aught but his meditations; Altham, intently regarding him—with arms folded on his breast, uttering at intervals a deep sigh, indicative of more sorrow than was consonant to his youth or his general manner.

It was an interval of extreme embarrassment to the Page; but his companion, absorbed in profound reverie, heeded it not. At length the former stopt, and Lewen, who had accompanied the motions of the youth, mechanically obeyed the same impulse at this moment.

They stood by the side of a large sheet of water that spread over a wide extent of space The moon sparkled on its clear and sleeping surface. The chimes of a neighbouring church played

tunefully, and came more sweetly over the ear of Altham, because their recent invention had rendered the sound very rare. He said softly—

"Aspirant auræ in noctem; nec candida cursum
"Luna negat: splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus."

"Page, thou art a miracle," Lewen, roused by this address, exclaimed with an animation that appeared unnatural to him. "Whether I contemplate thee in thy wild audacity as I have seen thee with yonder old man; or in thy graceful meekness bowing before thy Lady; or in thy enthusiasm of feeling bursting from thee but now; or in thy acquirements,—Page, thou art still a miracle!"

"It would have been hard," he returned with a piercing laugh, full of glee and effrontery, "and I must have been more than ordinarily dull, if I had been so constantly exposed to the

learned society of Father Valerius, or the dolorous pensiveness of my Lady the Countess, without acquiring a small portion of the prevailing qualifications of each. After all, I am but an elfish boy, and, in sooth, mischief and merriment are more delicious to me, than the best draught of the best sack to Shirley. Well, shall I play off another strain on thee? Thou must know, in all our Moralities, I am the best actor that ever gained applause from the groundlings. Come, what wilt thou have now? Nay, if thou repayest my mirth only with frowns, in very truth it is time I subdued myself to the mortified aspect of a poor penitent."

Lewen replied not. He exhibited that appearance of perfect calmness which, although distinguishing him on all ordinary occasions, had never appeared amongst the various expressions of countenance that had been

elicited during his conversation with Philip Altham. He walked onwards with an evident intention of returning to the castle.

"Oh, thou art tired of the night-air," cried the Page. "Well, that is a weariness I can comprehend. I can conceive it possible to prefer a blazing hearth to a bright sky in April. But how have I been fooling away the time, when I should have been glad to talk with thee on something serious! The castle portal will open on the morrow to admit the Lady Blanche Evelyn, which should be the signal of some change in the economy of our establishment, that shall indicate a less forcible propensity than it usually exhibits to render life as sad as may be. The young heiress will have but little difficulty in leading my Lord her father any way best suited to her inclination. But for my Lady the Countess! Be-

tween ourselves, Master Lewen, it strikes me, that she looks forward to the visit of her only daughter with more profound horror than to the severest penance Father Valerius could impose."

The Page paused, looking openly and maliciously in the face of the Secretary. Lewen's countenance exhibited no emotion that could satisfy the curiosity of his observer, by revealing what passed within.

"Lady Blanche Evelyn is a stranger in her father's house!" remarked Lewen coldly.

"Truly she is," replied the Page, "and her abode in the mansion of my Lord Duke of Suffolk in Leicestershire, has only just been preferable to the gloomy life she must have led here. But, hist, there is the vesper bell, and I must hie to my Lady. Farewell Master Lewen," he added, laying his

hand familiarly on the shoulder of Lewen; "meditate not overmuch on what has passed between us, lest thou shouldst too harshly condemn the equipée of the poor Page of the Lady of Arding."

Altham glided away, avoiding any reply Lewen might have meditated.

But Lewen obeyed not the parting injunction of that young page. His memory of their singular interview was vivid, and his mind was divided between recollections of it, and meditations on the anticipated arrival of the Lady Blanche. Intensely ruminating, he continued to wander in the night-air, until the lights flashing before the windows of the castle, warned him, that the devotional exercises had terminated. Slowly he passed onward, his view still directed into himself, occupied in deep self-communion. Perhaps the very energy of his reflections in-

duced the general calmness of his appearance; at this moment, no external perturbation was visible; his countenance retained its usual expression of philosophic tranquillity. He paused for a moment at the postern; looked upwards, sighed deeply, rather to inhale the balmy air, than to relieve the weariness of the soul; once a smile passed over his features, but it was not a smile of happiness, and it faded immediately. When he entered the castle, his face was placid as sleeping infancy.

CHAPTER IV.

"He bare himself in such a fashion,
So full of man and sweetness in his carriage,
And, what was chief, it showed not borrow'd in him,
But all he did became him as his own,
And seemed as perfect, proper, and possest,
As breath with life, or colour with the blood."

Ben Jonson.

"*Il* plait, *il* choque, on l'aime, on *le* haït, on *le* cherche, on l'évite, on diroit qu'*il* communique aux autres la bizarrerie de son caractère."

THE next morning's sun rose bright and clear from the distant ocean. A gorgeous crimson glowed on the eastern sky, deepening towards the horizon, and blending its gradually paler hue with the light azure of the mid-heaven. Spiry points of deep red studded the undulating clouds, scin-

tillating like meteors, aptly picturing the first flashes of fiery light which flamed at the command of the Most High, from the gloomy bosom of chaos. All nature blushed in that orient light. It imbibed the hue descending from the Heaven of Heavens. The water sparkled as it received the first kiss of the rosy morn; it was the eye of a lover kindling beneath the glance of his beloved. The trees waved in the early breeze; it was the salutation of a friend greeting with kindly welcome the return of some dear one. Awakened to the conviction and the enjoyment of a new existence, the whole pulse of animated creation throbbed rapturously; it was the pre-eminent sensation of invigorated intellect; it was the winning of another day from death. Lewen, reclining on the summit of an eminence, felt how multitudinous was the society of that unpeopled solitude. He en-

joyed the communion he held with the universe. He loved to cope with nature; to hold intercourse with the ancient mother of an infinitely numerous offspring; to collect from her more truths than tradition ever treasured, than record ever presented to the view of man. He marked the gradual progress of light, and he recalled the education which had been bestowed on the human race, a preparation for their reception of the revelation of the Divine will. Every thing breathed instruction; the world teemed with evidences of the truth of God. If ever eternity and infinitude were within the grasp of the comprehension of man, it was in such a scene. If ever the heart of man swelled to rapture as he commented on it, that heart was Leaven's.

The exquisite paleness of his complexion disappeared beneath the animated suffusion breathed over it by the

consciousness of redundant vitality. It was one of those moments in which his own dignity is most sensibly felt by man; a moment that repays to the possessor of feelings too acutely refined, the anguish they pour upon him in the grosser communion he must hold with fellow-men of unhallowed spirits. The mind of Lewen was a beacon in a night of misty darkness; an antedating of that brilliant birth of genius which was soon to illumine the world, bursting forth from the thick gloom of ages. All that mind shone in the splendid expression of his countenance at this sacred moment. Lewen felt that it was a holy season, sanctified by the Almighty's breathing life on his world, and kindling into positive existence what had lately been inanimate. It was a season in which earth was not to be remembered—in which time was to be forgotten; all

things spoke of Heaven and eternity: Lewen's mind was rapt in them.

Such feelings—foretastes of the rapture of the blest—were too exquisite to endure for a long period. The delight into which the action of the imagination plunges man, exhausts itself, and he awakes to consciousness of real existence.

The extraordinary illumination of Lewen's countenance subsided. His eyes lost their starry brightness; his complexion its splendid colour. He became again gravely pale as usual; but his expression was not so tranquil. There was a restlessness—an anxiety—which was sometimes perceptible, but its indications were so gentle that none but an attentive, perhaps an interested observer would have remarked them. His vision too was steadily directed towards one point, veering only to

the sky. It was the look of expectation; it was the herald of the day's events.

The concentrated splendor of the illumination of the eastern Heaven. dispersed itself over the whole etherial canopy, in the sober cheerfulness of confirmed light. Still Lewen reclined musingly on the eminence he had chosen. No gesture, no emotion, disturbed the profound repose of his attitude, until the gentle sound of a single bell smote on his ear. He recognised it; it was the summons to the Catholics of the Earl of Arding's household, to attend the matins of their Lady, of Father Valerius. Lewen started; he arose. He put his hand in his bosom, drew thence the symbol of Catholic devotion, kissed it, and threw himself on his knees towards the point of the sun's rising. Long and fervently he kneeled there, in the deep silence of

the heart's prayer. Paler than aught living was that countenance on which were imprinted feelings too intense for other expression. His interest gradually became more energetic; to appearance he had not only shut out from between his soul and his God all intrusion of worldly thoughts; he even lived not here. There seemed the stillness—the rigidity of marble. His breathing was that of thought; his emotions were too profound for the pouring forth of them; they became too potent for the weakness of the human frame. Completely exhausted, he sunk enfeebled, but not insensible, on the earth. No; he was not insensible. He was conscious that his head was gently supported; he felt the breath of soft sighs wafting over his face; he felt warm tears fall on it. He heard the eloquent plaint of a voice tuned to all that was ever soft in pity, grateful in compassion. He felt a hand, delicate as

woman's, but cold as marble, pressed to his temples—to his heart. He heard himself called on, in every accent of terror and anxious affection. He had not the power—he had not the inclination to answer. His senses were occupied to intensity—agitated to delirium. He saw the pallid face of that young Page bending over him. He felt that tender cheek pressed against his; he *almost* felt the pressure of the boy's lips on his throbbing temples. His eyes swimming in their liquid light were dewy as the plants around, glittering with the tears of departed night. His trembling anxiety of attention—the breathless solicitude of his attitude—the mute eloquence of his gesture—the whispered agony of his murmurings—were inexplicable as they were impassioned. Lewen was overwhelmed by new and mingled feelings,—by gratitude, admiration, and tenderness. If his

dreams had ever, for one transient moment, dwelt on woman, as such they had pictured her, a softer angel. And in one of his own sex, he saw that kindliness which had been the only point in the female character that might have been dangerous to his imagination, that might have bewildered or mocked his reason. And it was that wild boy, that flippant Page, that frivolous trifler, that laughing favourite of woman, that inconsistent declaimer, who had never appeared before him but to dazzle by his inconsistencies,—it was he who wore this aspect, shining in a light more dazzling than ever, appearing in a yet more incongruous character. Lewen's dark eye rested on the face of the Page; Altham's cheek kindled under the glance; his hand still rested on the heart of Lewen; he felt its throbbing under his pressure.

"Mother of God! he revives! I thank thee!"

This exclamation bursting from the lips of the boy, electrified Lewen. He was roused by it, and he recovered from his dreamy stupor to behold that Page bow with his face to the ground, then raise himself with a countenance on which was depicted ecstasy of happiness and gratitude. He arose, and Lewen raising himself, they walked together silently towards a verdant mound on the eminence, and in silence both were seated.

Lewen for an instant was embarrassed: his eye sought that of the boy, but it was veiled by its snowy lids, variegated by veins of tenderest blue, and fringed with lashes of a darker brown than his hair. The suffusion of his damask cheek deepened every moment beneath the glance of Lewen,

evincing that, although he avoided that glance, he was conscious of it. Presently a smile beaming with archness and all the frolicsome mischief of the Page, dissolved the enchantment his tenderness had produced, and restored Lewen to himself.

"I am a debtor to your compassion, fair Sir," said he gravely, but kindly; "I am not wont to be thus overcome, and I have kept more weary vigils than this has been!"

"That is to say, you are a debtor to the accident of my walking this way," returned the Page, with his usual carelessness. "There were odds against it when I came forth; I thought of steering by the ruins, for I am mightily anxious to discover if the spirits of the monks do really wander in their dilapidated fane. Admire my acuteness in supposing that the hour of matins would assemble them, as of yore, in

their chapel. One finds it difficult to discontinue old habits. And when our Father Valerius was Abbot there, believe me, no trifling reason might have excused the attendance of one poor brother, whose inclination pleaded for relaxation of discipline. The father is wise enough, and pious enough, but he retains too much of the monk to make a pleasant confessor in the establishment of a Countess. Meagre days come too often for damsels and pages—heigh-ho! Moreover the endurance of a penance for a smile during prayers, or an omission of attendance, is apt to raise one's envy of those of the heretic communion—even of *your's*, Master Secretary."

"Choose another theme for trifling, Page," said Lewen severely. "Thy jests become irreverent. Religion is too sacred to be a mark for thy levity, and respect thy spiritual superior and father. Speak not with lightness of

him to whom thou lookest for absolution of thy sins; and remember when thus the tempter assails thee, that the hour approaches when thou must kneel at the confessional, and avow even these thy speeches of lightness, on the penalty of thy soul's loss, young Page."

Altham smiled with an air of effrontery. Whilst Lewen spoke, the boy's eye had been fixed on a distant spot of the earth, even where Lewen had fallen senseless. When he was silent, the Page bounded from his seat—approached that spot—bowed down to the earth—then returned, whilst the air rung with his carolling laugh of glee and assurance.

"A very proper rebuke for one of thy creed!" said he confidently. "Come, why thou beliest thyself, thou beliest thy brethren. What! knowest thou not, that thou shouldst employ every moment of our interviews, which

I afford thee liberally enough, in attempts at my conversion? that thou shouldst rail at our holy father, the Pope? that thou shouldst speak most slightingly of the army of saints and martyrs? that thou shouldst reprobate our prostrations before their resemblances,—before the holy-rood, as bowing to images of wood and stone, as a worship rendered to Baal? What reason hast thou that thou dost not so, even as thy brethren do? Sir Stranger," added he laying his hand on the shoulder of Lewen, and glancing earnestly in his face, "thou hast a reason that I wot of."

Lewen returned the Page's glance with one of tranquil inquiry. Altham put his hand in his bosom, and drew thence a rosary of peculiar stone, and very precious, which he silently, but with an expression of sarcasm, held up to the view of the Secretary.

Mary! the blessed rosary of Igna-

tius!" exclaimed Lewen, rising instantly, an expression of acute agony writhing his features, and deepening the paleness of his cheek.

"Receive it again, and guard it better from eyes less to be trusted than those of the poor Page of Arding," said Altham, returning it, his eyes glittering with tears. "Pay thy gratitude to thy patron saint, that conducted me hither at thy need, rather than another, rather than Mark Russell! Fear not for thy secret! With me it is sacred, secure, as in thy own bosom. Valerius himself shall not guard it more faithfully! And when thou art again about to condemn that lightness which may hereafter annoy thee, recollect that *thou* art shrouded in a veil of mystery, and *sometimes* question, whether the appearance of others be not equally deceptive, and withal less liable perhaps to suspicion!"

The Page seated himself in silence, and Lewen spoke not.

His countenance indicated no embarrassment, no indecision. It was tranquil, but it was deeply meditative. He gazed on the rosary with a fixed and earnest expression, then replaced it in his bosom.

"Young Page, enjoy that knowledge which accident has communicated to thee," said he. "I have no claim on thy secresy, because I have put no confidence in thy honour. Thou must act as thy discretion shall advise thee."

"I should be sadly at fault, were I to wait until *discretion* should be my guide," returned the Page, laughing in his usual spirit. Then he added seriously—"It is true, thou hast put no confidence in me! Ah, no! thou wouldst not enter into such a bond of

amity with him of whose heart thou knowest nothing! Thou hast no claim on my secresy! Oh, make now a claim, receive now a bond of it!" he exclaimed in tones of deepest passion, kneeling suddenly before Lewen, and clasping his hands with a gesture of supplication, that gave energy to the pathos of his singularly flexible countenance. "Hear me swear by all which that Heaven above us may contain; hear me swear to devote myself to thy service as I best may, to watch over thee as I best can, to sacrifice to thine my own weal, even if the dearest interest of my life oppose it! Oh, be ever, be ever, sublime in virtue as thou now art! Trample temptations under foot, bland and alluring though they may be!—Aye, and thou *wilt* be tempted!"

The voice of the Page ceased. He

became very pale. His head drooped. The arms of Lewen were extended, —they received him.

The insensibility of that young Page continued a very few minutes. The freshening breezes of the morning revived him. The glow on his cheek returned more deeply; he disengaged himself from the embrace of Lewen, and resumed his seat by his side.

He reverted not to the scene that had just passed. With incomparable delicacy he spoke as if he had made no discovery; as if Lewen were not in his power.

"Last night was delicious," said he. "I loved to gaze on the full-orbed moon, shining so resplendently. It was beautiful as the pallid face of a fair girl. But it was, in sooth, somewhat melancholy. This is the gladdening hour, which, thou didst affirm, harmonizes best with a spirit such as

mine. Our lengthened intercourse may, perchance, reveal to thee thy mistake. Albeit, I *do* love this splendid season. It speaks of happiness and youth, of such happiness as youth *should* feel, at least! Father Valerius gives this hour to meditation in his closet. Thinkest thou this is wise? Would not the heart expand to the Creator of all more joyously when contemplating his magnificent works, than when reading the Fathers, pious and excellent although they be? What commentary on His benevolence, so apt, so copious, so penetrating, as yonder luminous sun, the parent of life, the renovator, the support, the comfort, the best blessing of a beauteous world! Trust me, I think these zealots are mistaken, whose devotion awakens over a relic, but slumbers even when a breeze, like this that cools us now, should kindle it to a pure and holy flame!

The fair face of creation, if interpreted rightly, should convert more infidels than all the dogmas of a sect, or the eloquence of a thousand priests."

"A prospect like this," returned Lewen, "does, indeed, inspire us with a lively adoration of the Supreme Being; but it cannot teach us to offer that adoration in the most acceptable manner. For this cause Father Valerius reaps more benefit from his private meditations than thy enthusiasm willingly allows."

"Oh, I think not with thee,—in sooth, I cannot think with thee," said the Page earnestly. "Is not this beating heart," he laid his hand on his bosom, —"are not these tears, an acceptable offering to Him who penetrates the source of both? Trust me, when kneeling on the cold pavement of the chapel, inclosed by its walls, my soul is chilled, imprisoned, and chained

down when it should take an upward flight. Away with the forms man has dictated! In admiring creation, I love the Creator. This is sufficient he is a God of love."

"But also a God of justice, of power, of truth," replied Lewen gravely. "Render a holy obedience to His vicegerent on earth; consider not lightly those ordinances which have been appointed as the means of salvation. Despise not the shadows of that substance to which our eternal hopes cling, lest thou neglect the substance itself."

"But my soul is wearied with the incessant darkening of these shadows," returned the Page. "From my very infancy they came over me. Superstition rocked my cradle—legends of Monks and Martyrs were my nursery tales. Aye, they were tales to amuse infancy, but dawning

reason sickened of the stale repetition. My teachers were not politic: habit rendered familiar what might have dazzled me by awakening my wonder at a more advanced age. I spurned their fables; I felt myself a being of passion, capable of more intense existence than they displayed to me, and I believed that such as *I* was, *all* were. Yes!" he continued, his countenance splendidly brightening—"My own heart detected their impostures, and scorned them! Aye, and I was to penetrate into the secret sanctuary of him who was a master-spirit there! What saw I? A being of passions too! Passions, not resembling my passions—oh, no! no! darker and deeper! I saw him, but he stood not all revealed. I saw his soul, and it was a shapeless mass, the form of which I discovered not! Oh, this taught me to believe nothing! this taught me

to doubt all appearances! this taught me to see the volcanic fire devouring and burning that earth, the surface of which was so fair, and smiling, and sunny! Man, thought I, is all passion. He who has appeared to others cold and tranquil as the grave, is the victim of storms and tempests that shatter him incessantly. They are all hypocrites;—there is no truth. Every feeling confirmed and strengthened my disbelief Conviction and credulity struggled no longer—the bubbles which had delighted my childhood, burst, and I saw their folly. I no longer trusted in those, who had idly pourtrayed to me martyrs and beings who had no earthly hopes and fears. Man that is of earth, must be earthy. I rejected those dogmas which commanded a perpetual warfare against the passions with which I was created. Can the leopard change its spots? Could I subdue

the dominant characteristic of my species?"

The Page paused, his kindling eye flashing with intolerable wildness, and his whole countenance glowing with ardent animation. Lewen observed him silently during some minutes.

"Impious boy! and yet, oh, how much to be pitied!" said he at length, commencing indignantly, but involuntarily softening as he proceeded. "Unhappy child! abusing thus the boon of talents which Heaven has bestowed on thee! sinking thy soul to utter and inconceivable perdition! Thinkest thou, that He who created thee with passions, gave them to thee as weapons which thou mightest impiously—but, oh, how impotently!—wield against himself in blasphemy and rebellion? Why art thou endued with the privilege of reason, but to subdue those passions? What is life?—the theatre in which thou art to

educate thyself for eternity. Will these passions, of which thou boastest thyself so much, exist then? Knowest thou not, thou shalt then be a spirit, even as the angels above? Endeavour to purify thyself here, that thou mayest become a meet inhabitant of that abode where no passions are!"

"How, then, fell Lucifer?" demanded the Page with a keen laugh. He paused an instant. "Come, thou wilt allow, at least, that frequently as I woo thy society, I do my best that thou shouldst not tire of the wearisome insipidity of perpetual sameness. Thou hast seen me in various guise, and even yet, I baffle all thy penetration—I set at nought all thy learning—thou knowest not what is my reality. Numberless have been my appearances, what my individuality? Aye, and I too have *learning*, and I value it as it should be valued!"—he laughed with withering

scorn; then added slowly. "What a mockery is all!"

Lewen sat silently. He was occupied in the contemplation of that young Page, to the utter exclusion of all other thoughts. Altham carelessly endured the full glance of Lewen, sometimes meeting, sometimes slightly evading it. Presently he arose, and approached the very brink of the precipitous eminence. Lewen watched him as he stood there: his slender form hovering almost in air, the light falling on his sky-blue vest, he seemed a being moulded from the material of the azure firmament. His body was firmly poised on one fairy foot, the other waved to and fro over the depth beneath; it was the attitude of a "winged Mercury, just lighted on some heaven-kissing hill." Lewen's associations savoured, perhaps, less of profane illustration, but they were not less flattering. To him the young Page seemed a

cherub subdued by the wiles of Satan, falling even now midway from heaven, and still retaining his unmixed divinity of appearance.

Presently Lewen arose, and prepared to descend the verdant slope which, on the opposite side of the hill, gently slanted to the level ground. With one elastic bound, the light Page was at his side.

"It is not wise to quit thy former station," said the latter, "it will answer the end thou hadst in view, better than any other thou canst find in the whole demesne of Arding. Come, confess now; thy slumber has been interrupted by dreams of the bright eyes of the Lady Blanche. Thou art come hither but to obtain an early view of her. Well, I value thy impatience; it speaks of more animation and eagerness than I had imagined, dwelt in that calm breast of thine."

Lewen's features wore an expression of displeasure, but even the anxious eye of the Page could discern no embarrassment lurking there.

"Forgive me!" said Altham clasping his hands with an air of supplication, which harmonized not with the haughty sarcasm of his countenance. "I commend thy honest zeal for thy new master; I laud thee, that thy ambition is so subdued; that it feels the impossibility of starting so high a quarry. I confess that I ought not so lightly to have coupled the name of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, in whom are vested so many honours, the centre to which so many high claims verge, with that of her father's Secretary! I thank thee for thy silent reproof; it was intelligible, and I bow before it."

And with a malicious mockery, Altham bowed himself in reverent obeisance to Lewen.

A transient crimson had flushed Lewen's cheek. It was but the hectic of a moment. His countenance resumed its quietness.

"Previous reflection would preserve thee from the humiliation of subsequent apology," said Lewen. "The very name of the heiress of Arding ought to be sacred to thee and me."

"Sayest thou?" returned the Page. "And what is a pretty girl that one should not admire her, even though she be seated on a throne? As for me, I avow to thee, that I am curious to see if the Lady Blanche much surpasses that fair damsel of my Lady's, of whom doubtless thou hast heard our seneschal speak by the name of Lettice."

"Audacious boy!" said Lewen, indignant at the malicious effrontery of the Page. "Break not on my solitude with assurance such as this."

The lip of the youth trembled; his

eyelids drooped over his suffused eyes. "I have erred!" he said softly, in a tone of penitence which his countenance belied not—"I have erred! Forgive me! In the name of the Lady Blanche," he continued in an agony of supplication, suddenly prostrating himself before Lewen—"in *her* name, for *her*, oh pardon!"

"From *me*, then, accept *her* forgiveness," said Lewen, but he still preserved his grave severity of aspect. "Thou art young, and thy buoyant spirits prevent thy soberly reflecting on what is due to all men. Preserve thy gaiety, if in the prilgrimage of this probationary existence thou *canst* indeed be gay; but soften it by reason; seasonably subdue it; or tremble lest the vengeance of Heaven should pronounce it unhallowed, and lest thy lips, from which so much of levity issues, be

scorched by the purifying fire, even until thou art consumed."

Lewen paused—he raised the boy—Altham bowed on his shoulder, and Lewen felt the convulsive trembling of his form, as he leaned there. Lewen disengaged himself, and they stood in silence on the hill side.

The eyes of both were bent on the ground in deep and earnest thought. Strangely contrasted were those two forms, but both were beautiful; yet the grandeur of the beauty of one of them was terrible,—the softness of the other lovely even to celestial perfection. The stature of either towered not above the other. Altham was a stripling—Lewen equalled not the middle height of man. And both were slender almost to fragility; but there was a tender helplessness in the appearance of the Page decidedly opposed to the firmness of

Lewen's exterior, and to the energetic cast of his limbs. Lewen's features were moulded with statue-like perfection; those of the Page were *as* perfect, but their animation softened their outline, and they were blended with the play of continual life. It was the contrasted beauty of blooming youth and manly prime; and soft as was the appearance of that young Page, his companion's was so splendidly graceful, that the imagination easily overleaped the transit of a few more years, and beheld the boy ripened into *such* a man, or one scarcely less dignified in pre-eminent exterior.

Slowly uprose the eye of that Page from the earth; it sought that of Lewen; but his glance was still bent downwards. Then Altham looked onward, and he spoke.

"Some one approaches; even now I see him winding hitherwards by the

path-way round the oak," said he. "It is my Lord's Chaplain."

Lewen looked also. "It *is* Russell!" said he. "Page, subdue the agitation of thy appearance; to avoid suspicion, always appear tranquil."

"Deception is no new lesson! It is hard always to simulate!" returned the Page, in low murmuring tones; but Lewen heard him not, for his eye rested on the vaulted firmament, and he appeared 'rapt in fervent contemplation, albeit in serious, for the mood of his countenance was tranquil.

The step of Russell as he approached was firm; his brilliant eye was fixed on the two figures that stood as beacons on that hill; it was keen, observant, and penetrating. Lewen marked it not, but Altham frequently encountered its searching glance, and he shrunk not from it.

When Russell reached that eminence,

he looked on the world spread out before him. It was a delicious scene, too beautiful for the ascetic who rejected all that offered delight to the senses, as strengthening the chain that bound the soul to earth—as extending its distance from the realms of purity and eternal bliss. Russell addressed Lewen.

"This morning dawns gloriously on us," said he. "Let us not forget that this beauteous scene is not our Zion, aptly though it may picture it. It is but an Oasis in the desert of our pilgrimage. Let it not tempt us to bound our views by its horizon, and to pitch here our tents, forgetting the Canaan promised to us, the heavenly city, veiled from mortal eyes."

"Nevertheless, we are not forbidden to pick up manna here, that we may refresh our fainting souls." said Lewen.

"It behoves us still to be cautious that the manna be taken for refreshment

only, not for luxury or delight," returned Russell, in the very fullest tones of his deep voice. "On all sides we are begirt with temptation. What is yon fair smiling plain, but the field of our warfare, where legions of evil spirits battle against us, and where we shall need the whole panoply of faith to shield us from the mortal thrust of their weapons? Because the path is flowery, let us not therefore believe that no adders lurk there. Because the sun shines on it, let us not forget that the thunder-cloud impends over it. Because the limpid stream runs through it, let us not forget that it may become dry, and that we may long in vain for the fresh water-brook. Let us aim at drinking of the well-springs of living waters! Let us shun all things, however alluring, that may alienate our hearts from the great God of Israel! Let us so run, that at the end of our

course, we find not ourselves numbered with the reprobate."

Russell's manner was solemn, and animated even to enthusiasm. Lewen stood with an air of submission, and the silence of the Page was gracefully reverent.

"You have been an inmate in the castle of Arding long enough to comprehend all the regulations of its internal establishment," resumed Russell, his voice deepening in severity. "Laud be unto God, grace has been given to us to set apart certain seasons to His worship—to the rendering up of thanks and praises to His name. How comes it, that at the devotions of yester-evening you were not present—that I have likewise had to remark on your absence this morning? Seeing the vigilance of those of our unhappy brethren, who wilfully blind themselves to the truth, in approaching

His altar with the service of their superstition, shall *our* zeal slacken, and shall *we*, with the sacred truth in our hearts, on our lips, on our foreheads, neglect one holy rite which may testify, that the Divine unction of the Spirit has been poured out on us? Shall not the image of their Dagon fall prostrate before that of our Jehovah?"

"I regret that the omission should have given you offence," returned Lewen. "In truth, the beauty of last night's moon tempted me to stroll past the hour of devotion; and the splendor of this morning's sun induced a repetition of the fault. I trust, however, that my reflections were not unacceptable to the Father who penetrates all hearts."

Lewen bowed reverently, not to man, but to that Father of whom he had spoken.

"Against *me* was thy offence?" said Russell, indignation splendidly illuminating his countenance. "Nay, but against Him who is above hast thou grievously sinned. Excuse not thyself to erring man, who is like unto thee; bow down thy heart in His presence before whom man is a worm, and dust! Shall aught created, fair and admirable though it be, have power to withdraw thy thought from that hour when thou art called to public communion with Him? Even in contemplating the loveliness spread over the face of this earth, thou shouldst have traced up all to His creating hand, and have felt a holy impatience, until thou couldst have prostrated thyself before Him in the eye of his servants. If a beautiful season tempt thee thus, wrestle with its temptation; and if thou canst not

otherwise prevail, even flee! Young man, when you entered the abode of my pious Lord of Arding, I cautioned you that my eye was on you, to watch, to penetrate, to discover you. I have scrutinized you much—I have scrutinized you deeply; and what has been the result? I know you not even yet, but I have arrived at this point of certainty, much exists that *must* be known. And you, Philip Altham, who are so constantly to be found with my Lord's Secretary, hath not the Monk Valerius taught you to avoid inter-communion with a damned heretic?"

"He hath not so bidden me; perhaps, he hath more important occupations than to observe the bearing of a poor Page," returned Altham, with a mixture of impertinence and submission.

Russell loved the boy, reprobate as he believed him. He reproved his petulance, but he did it with gentleness, with an evident wish to amend rather than afflict.

The Page was subdued; he felt that reproof; but he felt also the indignant glance darted on him from the eye of Lewen; *that* wounded his very heart; *that* brought the tear to his eye; *that* recalled him instantly to the gentle bearing he displayed in the presence of the Countess.

Lewen stood in calm silence by the side of Russell, and he preserved an air of submission. Russell himself remained with his eye fixed on the high-road that wound in the view of that hill; his countenance had the austerity of an eremite, but it was sometimes brightened by a look of kindly feeling that

evinced the softness of the man, breaking from the gloomy veil which the bigot had folded around him. It was yet very early; but the place at which the Lady Blanche Evelyn had rested on the preceding night was a very short stage from Arding, and she was even now momentarily expected.

With the anxiety of expectation, that trio remained on the brow of the hill, their eager eyes strained onward, emulous to obtain the first glance of the courier who should intimate the approach of the expected cavalcade. He was at length discerned, and his entrance into the castle was witnessed. Yet the party descended not from their position. They awaited the far-off view of the Lady Blanche and her retinue.

But the attention of the Page was not engrossed by that object, of the single existence of which his two companions

were apparently conscious. *His* eye was fixed on the face of Lewen with a scrutiny intensely minute. His pallid cheek, his pale and parched lip, his respiration becoming evidently more difficult every moment, his glaring eye, evinced the absorbing and painful interest he felt in Lewen's least emotion. Every change of complexion, every fluctuating glance, was observed by him as the indication of some feeling, which he had an incomparably potent motive for developing. A cold and heavy dew hung on the brow of the Page. Acute agony convulsed every feature; but all the bitterness of his feeling appeared not, until Lewen, catching the first appearance of the cavalcade, as it emerged from behind the wood which had intercepted their previous view of it, exclaimed in ecstasy of pleasure, "Even now she

approaches! A few moments more, and I behold her!"

A deep sigh followed this remark, and Lewen's transitory emotion of exquisite joy was succeeded by feelings evidently painful.

Russell, too much absorbed in himself to listen to the involuntary exclamation of another, suffered the expression which had escaped Lewen, to pass without comment. But the Page had caught every tone of it, and he treasured it up in his heart, to be thought of in many subsequent moments with agonizing bitterness.

They quitted their station, and entered the vaulted hall of the castle, as the Earl himself approached it by an avenue that had an internal communication.

It was lined with domestics and retainers, all anxious to behold, to greet,

the future heiress of the lands they tenanted, of the houses they possessed, of the services they could render. The meridian days of feudal pomp had fled, but vestiges of it still remained, and the popular Chief was *in fact* despotic as formerly, if he had ceased *legally* to be so.

The Lady Blanche, attended by her equerries, approached the portals of that home, which had so long been shut against her. Her milk-white palfrey—for, at this time, the luxury of carriages was unknown in England—pawed the earth, and tossed its graceful neck, proud of the high-born beauty it carried. The formality of etiquette was disregarded by the father in such a moment as this. He rushed forward, and Lady Blanche springing off the animal, was instantly in his arms. Lewen heard the whispered blessing,

the paternal benediction—he witnessed the filial embrace. He saw no more; a mist came over his eyes; and unobserved by all but the anxious Page, he retired to the privacy of the apartment appropriated to him.

CHAPTER V.

> "Sæpius olim
> Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta."
>
> *Lucretius.*

WITH all that anxiety natural to the feelings of a parent in so peculiar a situation, the Earl of Arding contemplated his daughter, the Lady Blanche Evelyn.

Deprived of her society during so many years, a privation which he was compelled to endure by interests yet more powerful than paternal tenderness, he now felt that she was near him, he now listened to her, with a tender rapture of which, from

the melancholy tranquillity of his manner, it might have been deemed that he was incapable. He had ardently desired to procure for her all that learning of which the age was ambitious, all those accomplishments which the taste of the royal Henry had decided as essentially requisite to the embellishment of personal beauty, indeed almost indispensable to its existing in perfection. To these he fervently prayed, that an ardent attachment to the doctrines of the Reformed religion, a perfect conviction of its purity and legitimate deduction from those taught by the Founder of Christianity and his immediate apostles, should be superadded. The house of the *then* Marquis of Dorset,—the present Duke of Suffolk,—was the academy where these desirable acquisitions might be made in the utmost perfection. And the

Earl felicitated himself with honest exultation on the success of his plans, as he gradually developed the leading traits that characterised the mind of his daughter.

Educated with Jane Gray; the beloved companion and bosom-friend of that unfortunate and illustrious Lady; enjoying with her the instructions of Dr. Elmer, of whose attainments those which his celebrated pupil acquired under him, have transmitted to posterity evidence that cannot be impugned; Lady Blanche Evelyn boasted a profound learning, decidedly contrasted with the light accomplishments of females of the present age. The acquirement had been difficult, and the cause of many sacrifices heavy to the heart of a girl; but Blanche had been stimulated by the example of the highly talented Jane Gray. The mind of the young heiress of

Arding, lively, acute, and penetrating, could have found pleasure in those amusements from which she, who was hereafter, though but for a transient moment, to wear the Crown of England, would have revolted. Blanche boasted not that perfection of mingled heroism and tenderness which constituted the irresistible charm of her exquisitely beautiful friend, a charm which has gained the admiration of ages, that admiration which will extend to the most remote posterity. Blanche was lovely, animated, and devotedly attached to the Lady Jane. But when Roger Ascham* found the

* "Roger Ascham, tutor to the Lady Eliza-"beth, coming once to wait on her [Lady "Jane Gray] at her father's house in Leicester-"shire, found her reading Plato's works in "Greek, when all the rest of the family were "hunting in the park. He asked her, 'How

family of Broadgate assembled in the park enjoying the diversion of hunting, all save its most accomplished member, Blanche was revelling in the luxuriance of this animating and, to her, particularly delightful amusement. But, in spite of the occasional carelessnesses to which the gaiety of youth had inclined the heiress of Arding, she returned to the demesne of her father, with a stock of erudition which delighted the Earl, and with an attachment to the Reformed Church, so firm, so undeviating, acquired as it had been in the spot where that religion was most

" she could be absent from such pleasant diver-
" sions?' She answered, 'The pastimes in
" the park were but a shadow to the delight
" she had in reading Plato's Phædon,' which
" then lay open before her."

Burnet.

highly reverenced, as afforded satisfaction amounting to rapture, to the zealous and pious Russell.

The Earl's exultation at the complete success which had attended his plans of the education of his heiress, was, however, mingled with some bitterness of feeling.

He was about to introduce that daughter to a mother who abhorred the religion she professed with so much zeal, as a damnable heresy, a detestable falling off from the truth, a pulling away of the foundations from the Church of Christ. Lord Arding dwelt painfully on all that mother had suffered, and the persecutions she had endured previously to her union with him; on the remorse that had distracted her almost immediately after that union had been solemnized; on the heart-rending affliction that had bowed her to the

borders of the grave, in the loss of her first-born ; on the agony of her prayers to himself, when, after Heaven had again blessed them with a child, he had marked out the necessary steps for its education in the Reformed communion. And now that he was to present this child to her, blooming in all the graces of youth and loveliness— how would she contemplate her? As a lost one, an heir of perdition. What reception would she extend to her daughter? Would it not be characterized by those sentiments of horror and despondence with which her heart would be affected?

And that child, so young, so tender, so lovely, so impatient to receive the caresses of a mother, what would be her distress on perceiving the heart of that parent alienated from her, regarding her as an object of terror, or, if a softer sentiment were felt for her,

of *pity*; all maternal love checked beneath the austere control of a bigoted religion, and a mistaken piety?

The heart of the Earl throbbed with anxious pain, whenever the lips of the Lady Blanche demanded tidings of her mother. He sought to evade the inquiry, and he discussed the concerns of Broadgate Park, and the approaching marriage of Lady Jane Gray. But the filial impatience of Blanche permitted not this evasion. And the Earl, sorrowfully and reluctantly, despatched a messenger to his Countess, intimating to her the desire of her daughter to receive her maternal welcome.

Between the reception of that message and the Countess's answer to it, there was an interval of half an hour. The Earl dreaded its termination; the Lady Blanche wondered at its duration. A fearful, trembling, and

scarcely admitted doubt, sometimes shot athwart her brain, torturing her with the suspicion that her mother's heart expanded not towards her, as her imagination had fondly pictured. It was too painful to be dwelt on, and when the messenger of the Countess arrived, it was forgotten.

Philip Altham was that messenger. He brought to the Earl a notification, that his Lady was prepared to receive the Lady Blanche Evelyn. *She* shuddered at the formality of the message, too much engrossed by it, to observe him who brought it. But *he*, with devouring eyes, examined her with an intenseness too earnest to have escaped the observation of one less occupied. The cheek of the Page turned pale as he contemplated the form just appearing to his view. He saw it with feelings whose interest was inexpressible,

scarcely supportable. His strained gaze hung on her, when his presence, if noticed, had been deemed an intrusion. He examined her with the acute glance of one, who desired to impress every lineament on his mind, that memory might hereafter present it to him, to be commented on, to be described with unimpeachable accuracy. He paused on her countenance, as if desiring to understand by it the heart that beat within that feminine form. The artlessness of the character it pourtrayed was not understood by him. He gazed on the youthful face, and felt that its expression was unintelligible to him. He saw its loveliness, but the glow of lively sensation blooming on it, exhibited an enjoyment of existence, which he comprehended not, and which seemed to him, irreconcilable with that extensive intellect, those high

aspirings, which he appreciated as the perfection of character common alike to both sexes.

The Earl took the hand of his daughter, and conducted her to the presence of her mother. He felt, with anxious alarm, the trembling of that little hand; he marked with inexpressible solicitude, the paleness which had displaced the animated glow of complexion, that formed so brilliant a characteristic of the beauty of Blanche. She looked up towards him, as the door of the Lady's apartment was thrown open, with a supplicatory glance that seemed to appeal for protection to him. He answered it with a kindly smile, and, in the next instant, Blanche Evelyn was in the presence of her mother.

At the upper end of the apartment stood the Countess; one hand pressed a crucifix to her bosom; the other

leaned on Valerius for support. Her form was erect, even with the unbending dignity of haughtiness. A stern expression of apathy strengthened the pride of her features. Perhaps it was assumed to shroud the too tender meltings of the mother's heart from the gaze of another;—perhaps it was the irrepressible indication of the feelings which really affected her.

The Earl conducted his daughter to the feet of her mother. Blanche sunk there with an emotion too profound for words.

The contrast exhibited by the mother and daughter at this moment, was too forcible to escape the observation of any who witnessed it.

The Countess stood with an air of solitary grandeur, exhibiting an effect similar to that which the last perfect pillar of a decayed, sumptuous edifice produces on the mind of the

spectator. It was royalty in ashes, still glowing with their former fires. It was dignity and beauty and pride wrapt in the shroud, but burning within it, flaming through it. The fiery splendour of the lustrous black eye flashed with all the radiance, which the consciousness of offering the most exquisitely painful sacrifice to religion, might be supposed to impart. It was the triumphant agony of a martyr, who feels the flames gradually devour him, and, in that bitter moment, is enraptured and exalted by the conviction, that he shall presently receive the crown which is to recompense his tortures. It was the feeling of the heathen zealot, who sacrificed his first-born to Moloch, hoping thence to secure his own salvation. The splendid crimson which glowed on the cheek of the Countess, concealed those ravages which the lapse of years of suffering had commit-

ted with that once perfect beauty. She seemed restored to the plenitude of youthful vigour and redundant health. The bold curve of her Roman features harmonized with the energy of those feelings by which they were, at this moment, impressed. Their grand outline seemed to acquire strength from the emotions of her mind, and, at the same time, to reflect those emotions with additional energy. With a piercing glance her dark eye was fixed on her daughter, but even then no maternal yearnings of the heart shone amidst its fierce splendour. There was the courage of endurance, the resolution that perceived the worst, and steadily watched its approaches—the pride, that rejected pity or the consolation of imparting that grief which swells the heart to bursting: every lofty feeling might be traced there, but none of the softness of a mother's welcome to a child who had

been so long lost to her, and now was found again.

The tender Blanche knelt at the feet of that mother with an eye whose soft beaming expression pleaded for love and compassion. Turned upwards, its deep blue orb seemed, with beautiful penitence, to entreat forgiveness of some crime into which unconsciousness might have precipitated her. Her soft dark-brown hair falling in clustering curls over her graceful neck and shoulders, was parted on a forehead lofty as that of the Countess herself, and perfectly white, except where the blue veins shone through its soft transparency. The paleness which had characterized her on entering the apartment, was lost beneath the deep glow of filial affection, impatient to propitiate that mother now for the first time appearing to her. The soft proportion of her features—almost Grecian in their

outline—completed the beauty of her countenance, and was touchingly adapted to the tenderness of her expression. All that feminine loveliness which constitutes the perfection of woman's beauty adorned Lady Blanche Evelyn's, animated by a vivacity of expression, admirably blending with this characteristic softness, and entirely preventing the approach to insipidity. Such was she who in vain sought from a parent, and a mother, one kindly glance of responsive feeling. No filial tenderness could thaw the ice-work in which superstition had encased her heart, or restore to its natural flow that blood which apathy had congealed.

The Earl beheld the distress of his daughter with indignation, not so much at her who had immediately caused it, as at him who had, by the dogmas of his creed, fortified her heart against the reception of that natural affection of

which it had once been susceptible. He knew that all the influence of the Confessor Valerius, must have been exerted to effect a meeting like this—to counteract those natural emotions which could not but affect a mother, on receiving her child—*such* a child—and after such a separation. Bitterly as the Countess might regret the errors of the faith of Lady Blanche, those errors would have been forgotten at such a moment, and nature would have asserted her rights, if the all-subtle Confessor had not fortified her against the admission of that amiable tenderness, which would have been the best excuse for positive sin.

With a brow clouded by sterner anger than had, for years, contracted it, Lord Arding approached Blanche. He raised, and supported her on his arm.

"Lady of Arding, receive, console,

and cherish, your daughter—the sole hope of our house—the last of her name!" he said, in a tone of deeper command than had ever marked his address to her who now listened to it with a distraction of aspect which he pitied, but which had not the power of softening anger elicited by a cause so potent.

The Lady turned her eyes from her daughter, on whom they had hitherto been fixed, and bent their glance on Father Valerius. His countenance remained immoveable and impenetrable. The Countess turned away in evident displeasure.

In a moment she collected herself and the natural majesty of her figure became more decided. She bent forwards, and imprinted a fervent kiss on the fair forehead of her daughter.

" Blanche Evelyn of Arding, wel-

come to the abode of your forefathers! welcome here!" she said, in a firm but kindly accent.

Blanche disengaged herself from the support of the Earl. The Countess, sunk into a seat; the fair arms of Blanche were wreathed around her neck. She covered her face with the tenderest kisses. "Bless, oh, my mother—bless and love your child!" she cried in a voice broken by emotion, and interrupted by the evidences of affection which she lavished on her parent.

The Countess struggled to disengage herself, but Blanche would not be so repulsed. She renewed her caresses. The Lady was apparently subdued. She clasped her daughter in an almost convulsive embrace. "My child! Mary bless thee, and pity thee, my lost one!" she exclaimed, in an agony of tenderness. "Jesu, be merciful to her! Mother of God, pardon for her!"

The head of the Countess leaned on the shoulder of her daughter. Their cheeks pressed against each other. The ears of Blanche bedewed the face of her mother; but although the frame of the Lady was convulsed by excessive emotion, she wept not.

The Earl folded the mother and the child in his embrace. "Thus be it ever! My God and my father, bless and confirm this union!" he said, in a voice of manly tenderness, of strong but subdued emotion.

The brow of Valerius lowered. His eye flashed with angry splendor. For a few minutes he contemplated the group in silence. His gloomy soul was not to be diverted from its purpose by any pity for the agony he might inflict, or any regret for the additional bitterness he might infuse into that cup already sufficiently bitter. His eye was fixed steadily on one point—the com-

plete restoration of the church of which he was a member, and to which he was so devotedly attached. He had traced out the only road by which his individual efforts could contribute to the advancement of such an end; and no weaknesses which the milk of human kindness might have occasioned, ever tempted him to swerve from it. And in his calculations, the utmost extremity of human suffering deserved to be considered but as dust in the balance, when by that suffering the interests of Christ's church on earth could be advanced. He knew that the feelings now struggling in the bosom of his penitent, the Countess of Arding, were the most adverse to his plans, and if permitted to endure, would eventually prove fatal to their success. His mode of action was immediately ascertained, and its operation instantaneously succeeded.

"If above all earthly affections, any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha," he said, approaching the Countess, his voice losing those bland tones which had so delightfully thrilled on the soul of Lewen, and deepening even to sternness.

The Countess, with a violent effort, disengaged herself from the arms of her husband and her child, evincing a shuddering horror, as if, by admitting their polluting touch, she had endangered the bringing of this terrible denunciation on herself.

She arose and, appeared erect as on their first entrance. A profound silence followed, broken only by the sobs of Blanche, who was weeping in unrestrained agony on the shoulder of her father.

The whole frame of the Earl was agitated by emotions so violent, that they

entirely changed that resigned expression which had formerly decidedly characterized him. He supported the trembling form of his daughter with tenderness; on his Countess he darted a glance of reproach; on Valerius, one of deep indignation.

"Shall our unfortunate child pay the penalty of a crime committed by us? Is this an acceptable expiation to heaven? Are such the doctrines of a mistaken religion? Can superstition so abuse her votaries?" he demanded, addressing the Lady: then turning to the Confessor, whilst keener lightning darted from his eye, "Are *you*,—you the inculcator of such sentiments, the instigator of a cruelty which the soul of woman could not of itself admit,—are *you* the befitting minister of a master who would not break the bruised reed, who would not quench the smoking flax? Know you not, that in banishing mercy

from your religion, you deprive it of the most admirable characteristic it can possess; and that those minds revolt from it and abhor it, which would otherwise, perchance, be allured by its pageantry and captivated by its external pomp? Will you harden the heart of the mother against the child? Will you sever those innumerable charities which nature herself has planted and pleads for? Be satisfied with the pains already endured by your unhappy victim; torment her soul no longer; suffer her to enjoy in peace that bliss after which every feeling pants."

Valerius had listened to the address of the Earl with the air of a man who is not to be spoken from his purpose, by argument, entreaty, or menace—an air partaking at once of carelessness and contempt. When Lord Arding paused, the Confessor steadily and in silence met his eye for the space of a few mo-

ments. His singular countenance beamed more brilliant illumination than was usual even to it. His tall figure was erect with a dignity that imparted grace, where the most awkward disproportions seemed imperatively to have proscribed it. He spoke, and his voice lost its powerful notes of persuasion and soothing, in the energy of indignation.

"In accepting the office of Confessor to the Lady of Arding," he said, "I incurred duties which I had accurately estimated, which I perfectly understood, and which I resolved to fulfil. I was to declare the truth to her, to point out the way by which she was to work out her final redemption, and to shorten the period of probationary suffering. I was to persuade her to pursue this path; I was, by my spiritual authority, to compel her to keep in it steadily. If she inclined from it, my arm was to restrain the steps by which she hastened

to perdition; I was to reclaim her to penitence, by which she might purchase beatitude hereafter. These were *my* duties; hers were implicit submission, undeviating obedience, scrupulous confidence. To this point our mutual discharge of the duties of our respective situations has been regular and undeviating. Shall we *now* fail? Because temptation becomes strong, shall we yield to it? Because the 'lust of the flesh,' 'the desire of the eyes,' and 'the pride of life' assail her, shall my penitent daughter be permitted to bow to them, when my voice may warn her and ensure victory to her? Because my duty is arduous, shall I not perform it? Shall the allurements which human passions and human weaknesses spread out to me, be listened to—conquer? Daughter, even now sorrow multiplies unto thee,—even now, Heaven itself presents to thee the bitter cup of penitence for a deep

crime committed by thee against its Majesty; even now, thou must drain it to the very dregs; and thou must not dare to complain of the wages thou hast gathered; having 'sown the wind, thou must reap the whirlwind.' Dismiss from thy presence the unhappy child who, from her birth even until now, has inflicted incessant punishment on thee. Retire into solitude, meditate, and pray."

"Joanna of Arding," said the Earl, leaning forwards, and speaking with great energy, "listen to this man, hear him even now—out of his own mouth judge him. He counsels you to abandon your innocent child, to inflict on the heart of her who never voluntarily offended you, a wound which no time can heal —which will bleed whilst memory lasts. Believe you, that *this* is the repentance God requires of us? Think you, He desires the mother to forget her child?

or that *her* sufferings will expiate your guilt? I cannot cope with the sophistry of your Confessor. I can declare to you only those simple truths which your own unperverted understanding would have revealed to you,—which were once legibly impressed on your heart."

"'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked'; who can know it?" said Valerius, and his brilliant eye was turned full on the Countess. "My daughter, hesitate not. Remember the crown that shall be thy recompense."

Blanche sprung forward to avert that design too plainly indicated by the collecting firmness of her mother's countenance. But the Countess shunned her eager embrace, and raised the crucifix, marking by her repulse of the nearer approach of her child. Silently the Lady, accompanied by her Confessor, retired.

The indignant Earl threw his arm around the weeping Blanche, whispering words of sympathy and consolation. He carried her from the scene of suffering, and endeavoured to disperse her melancholy by occupying her mind with those images of the past, which he tasked her memory to recall,

Some hours had elapsed since the arrival of the Lady Blanche, and still Lewen remained in the privacy of his own apartment. Shirley endured the absence of the Secretary with manifest impatience. He desired to obtain Lewen's opinion of the Lady Blanche; and he desired also to communicate to him her favourable and condescending notice of himself.

To attain these two desirable ends, he entered the apartment of Lewen. He appeared poring over a ponderous volume, his eyes intently fixed on it, and his mind so engrossed by it, that

the entrance of Shirley was unperceived, or at least unnoticed.

"So Master Lewen," said he, in a voice sufficiently audible, and the Secretary was immediately roused by it to attentive observation of the speaker, "this is a day of jubilee to all the faithful household of my Lord. The arrival of our young Lady ought, for manifold reasons, to be hailed by us with joy, inasmuch as all the honours of the race of Arding will be vested in her person, and moreover she is so sweet and lovely a Lady, that, for her own sake, I would rejoice in her presence. Marked you, Master Lewen, the courteous notice she bestowed on myself, who, although the chief domestic of my Lord, her father, am but as nothing as compared to her? saw you her smile as she kindly greeted me, when my Lord, with his usual condescension, pointed me out to her as that ancient follower, who had served him

from his boyish days even until now? The damsels I have formerly seen, are not comparable with her; they are as solitary tapers to the noon-day sun. No, not even the Lady Joanna herself, in her prime of youth and beauty, was so winning soft as the young lady of Arding. That daughter is all her father,—kind, benevolent, and meek."

"Thou sayest well, old man," returned Lewen, suddenly starting entirely from his usually frigid appearance, kindling with strong animation, and clasping the hand of Shirley, "thou sayest well. She is the fairest flower that admiration ever wished to preserve from the scythe of the destroyer. How lovely looked she, bowing in the arms of her father, and in deep silence receiving his fervent benison! How much to be [illegible] those who felt—never—a father's caresses,—who hoped—never—a father's favour, but of that Father

who is above all !" Lewen paused, and Shirley's astonishment at the warmth of his manner, prevented his breaking that pause by any remark of his own. But presently the fervor of Lewen's grasp relaxed ; he withdrew from Shirley, and, by a strong effort, regaining himself, proceeded : " From the present appearance of the Countess of Arding it might be deemed, that the beauty she possessed in youth, although perfect of its kind, was essentially different from that blooming softness, that almost childish glow of complexion and tender vivacity, which characterizes the Lady Blanche Evelyn."

If Lewen desired to prevent Shirley's attention from dwelling on the emotion he had previously displayed, nothing could be more politic, than this leading of his imagination to a point, in which he was so deeply interested. It not only diverted him from pursuing that channel

at the present moment, but by speedily impressing him in a different and powerful manner, he guarded against the probability of its recurring to the memory of the Steward on any future occasion.

"My Lady, the Countess, looked more royally, but she had not that inviting kindness which opens the heart to the lady Blanche so soon as she has once looked at you," replied Shirley, and Lewen smiled at this accuracy of discrimination in a mind whose conceptions were generally broad and rugged, but seldom stamped with a delicacy like this. "If my Lady's heart can withstand that look, and shut out al love and tenderness towards her daughter, the Confessor has certainly talked his own soul into her, and she has lost her woman's feelings."

"If it had been possible to have been present at their interview, curiosity would immediately have been satisfied,"

said Lewen. "Methinks I should be glad to learn, whether the amiable weakness of maternal affection, or the high heroism of religious devotion, has conquered."

"In that, then, I can satisfy you," said Altham, starting forwards with page-like agility, having entered without noise, and heard Lewen's last wish. "My Lady fairly resigns herself to the disposal of Father Valerius, who pronounces it a damning sin, that she should suffer herself to be overcome by any feelings of maternal tenderness towards a heretic child, whose principles, doubtless, have entirely changed that blood which nature dyed with the same hue and stain as her own. But there was a yielding moment when the holy Confessor might have trembled for his influence—a moment when the Countess embraced the Lady Blanche, and permitted also the embrace of the Earl.

The Father, however, saw the danger, and with admirable resolution preserved his penitent from it, even in the moment when it threatened to crush her."

"And where, Philip Altham," demanded the Steward, leaning forwards, and placing his folded arms on the tabl before him with an air of judicial gravity, his eyes distending in a broad stare which passed with *himself* as a glance of penetration—"where wast thou, that thou couldst possibly obtain this knowledge? The meeting interview between the Countess of Arding and the Lady Blanche Evelyn was not likely to be exposed to thy profane view. Philip Altham, thy effrontery will scarcely bear thee harmless through this matter, when it shall come to be searched into."

"And thine age only bears thee harmless through this moment, thou

testy old man!" retorted the Page keenly. "Thinkest thou, that I would stoop to gain information by unlawful means? Dotard! Thou and I must first change characters, ere thy suspicions awaken aught but indignation. Thou wilt search into this matter! Prithee do, thou quibbling VICE interrupting the serious business of our play, by thy absurdities! Neither spoke I for *thy* satisfaction, be well assured. Master Lewen, thy desire is gratified; thou knowest what has been the result of my Lady's interview with her daughter. Satisfy now *my* curiosity, and tell me truly, hath the beauty of the Lady Blanche that incomparable charm which thou didst expect to find in it?"

"Methinks, thou takest deep concern in the Lady Blanche's beauty," replied Lewen smiling kindly, and losing his repulsive gravity of demeanour, as soon as Shirley had re-

tired, and *he* chose not to tempt the present humour of the Page by remaining. "If thou wouldst know, then, learn, that to me the opening morning appears not so lovely. There is a charm so young, so pure, so holy, and so kind, in her, that she realizes all the visions which the 'rapt enthusiast may have indulged of angels. My fairest visions appeared to me never in forms of half that brightness. It is more touching than splendid, more alluring than perfect. And shall this being—sent here manifestly to show to us what exquisite attraction the Divine hand can impart to his creatures,—shall *she* be lost?" he continued, his voice deepening, and becoming more energetic even in the suppression of its fullest tones. "Shall she be an heir of perdition! Shall the net of Satan be suffered to coil around her, and to drag her downwards to the dread abyss? Mary

and mercy avert that punishment! Destroy not thus fearfully so gracious a beauty! Suffer it not to be the shrine of a spirit eternally devoted to destruction! Beautiful Blanche! wish for salvation, and in the wish secure it!"

Lewen paused, evidently suffering under the influence of strong emotion. The Page, concealing his face in the mantle gracefully depending from one shoulder, rushed hastily from the apartment.

END OF VOL. I.

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